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Vol. CCXI

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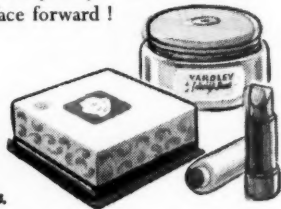
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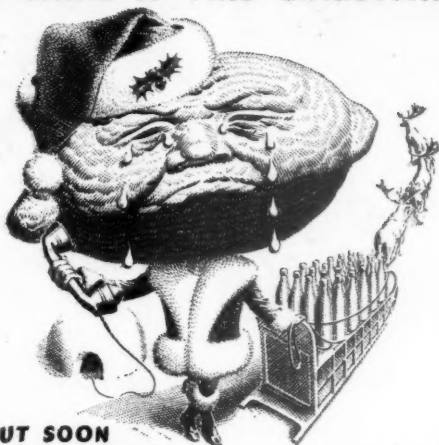
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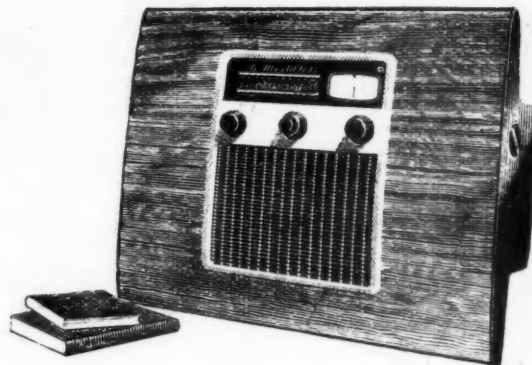
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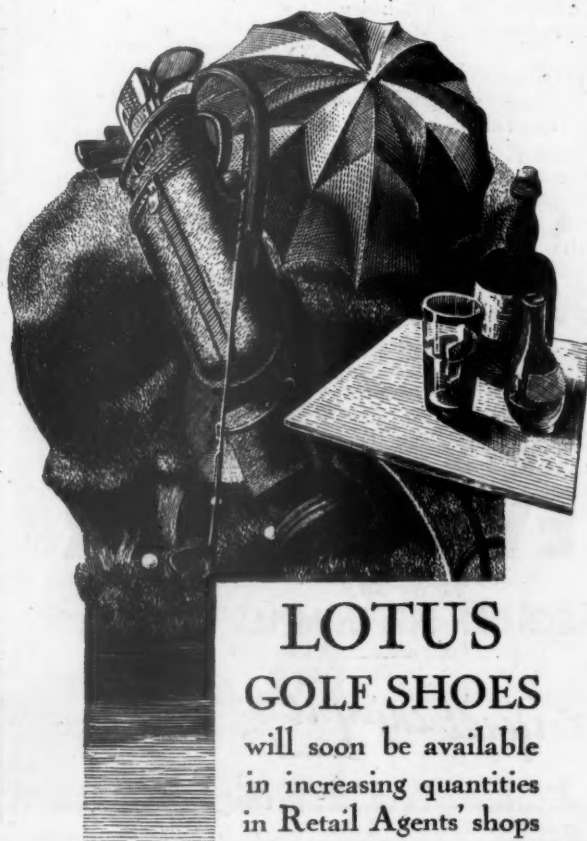
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4 Does present-day diet contain all these essentials?

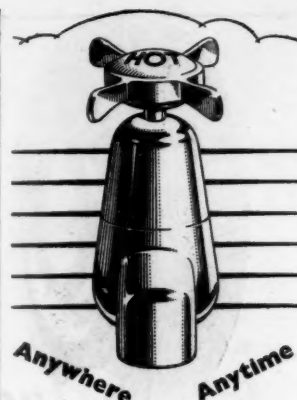
Frequently not. And never in a form in which everybody can fully assimilate them into the system. A vitamin-mineral reinforcement is rapidly beneficial to many.

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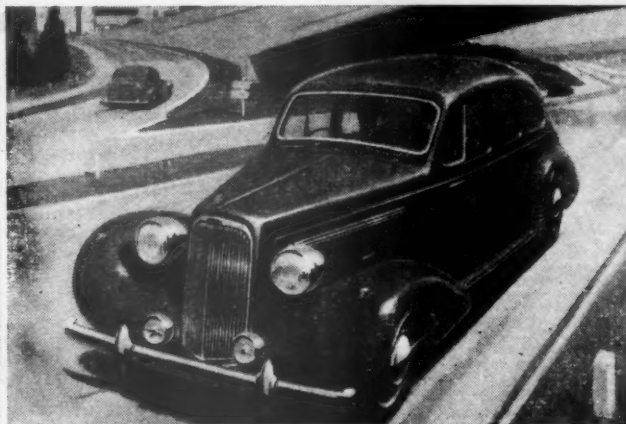


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That the best things
in life are free:
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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5529

December 11 1946

Charivaria

A PARTY of carol-singers in Hampshire is to be composed entirely of local tradesmen. It should be interesting to hear their rendering of "Sorry, No-el."

Queues have become part of our national life. They have even been known to form up outside closed shops.

Second-hand toy trains have been fetching big prices lately. But it is doubtful whether the Government will be influenced by this when they take over the railways.

Off the Shelf

"We have pleasure in reproducing a photograph of Mrs. —, whose resignation from the Unclaimed Goods Depot, King's Cross, on the occasion of her marriage, was announced on page 14 of the May issue."

"L.N.E.R. Magazine."



We read in the *Sunday Express* of a man who pulls double-decker buses along with his teeth. We know a conductress or two who could tame him.

During the showing of a news-reel of recent strike incidents a man in the audience got up and left the cinema, saying that this was where he came out.

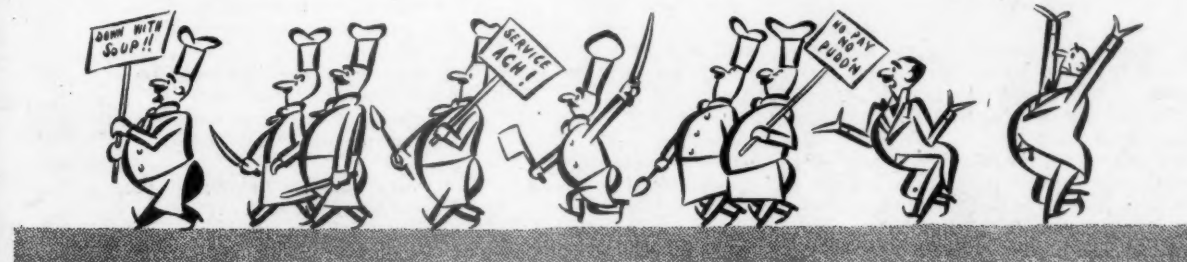
Don't Look Round Now...

"LADIES' ART SILK AND NYLON UNDERWEAR
now Showing in Charming Colours"
Draper's advt. in "Stroud News."

A correspondent confesses it amused him recently to watch a group of footballing urchins giving chase to a lad who had been acting as referee and ducking him in a trough. Generally speaking, of course, responsible fans deprecate cubbing.

The proprietor of a travelling circus says it is almost impossible to buy elephants nowadays unless one has influence or is very well known in the business. Big-game dealers, of course, have their counters made specially.

A news paragraph mentions that it is not impossible that Soho chefs might demonstrate for more pay. The March of the Men of Garlic.



Hard Days

A Few Short Words on the Air

I SHOULD like to have a short talk with you this week on the new Man Ape or Ape Man whose skull and bones we have found in the Far East, though when I say "we" I do not speak the strict truth, for I was not there when the corpse came to light and the tale was made known to the world. I had calls on my time which kept me chained to my desk in the Near West, though I seem to hear in my mind the clash of pick and spade, and I can feel the fierce thrill of the old ape hound run like a fire through my veins.

The point to note is that this new Old Ape Man is not so much like a New Old Ape as like a New Old Man, and that he lived half way through the Ice Age, as far as we can guess, so that he was much more old than the most old new ape man that has been dug up as yet, if you take what I mean. I had hoped to have Smith and Brown on the air with me to help me in what I have to say in this talk, for they know a great deal more of the Ice Age than I do, but they could not come. They had colds.

Well, this new half man or half ape had a jaw and teeth which are more like those of a man and less like those of an ape than all the jaws and teeth of all the new half men or half apes that have been found up to date, and what is more, his brain was so large that it would have weighed at least half as much as yours. I think it must have weighed one-sixth or one-eighth as much as mine.

It is not known how he died. There was no mark found on his skull. He may have been done to death by his own hand or by that of some half ape thrall or half ape friend. Nor can we be quite sure at this length of time as to the true date of death. But we took care that no parts of the skull or bones should be touched or moved till they had been taped and ruled and tried for prints. There was no sort of doubt that he had met his end.

What sort of life had he led? That was what we all asked at once. Did he have a gay time or was he bored? If Smith or Brown were here they could have told you more than I can, but I shall try to do my best.

He seems to have had the thighs and arms and hands of a man, and to have stood on two legs, as men are known to do at times, and to have walked more than they do from place to place. He used quartz tools of a kind, if not quartz pots (I shall pause for you to laugh here), and he carved bones to point spears, and he knew the use of fire. In a cold age like the Ice Age this must have helped him a great deal, and no doubt he saved wood when wood was scarce, and he had been warned by some ape of a high sort not to waste logs when he cooked his food.

Should we have liked to live the life of this man ape or ape man more than the life we lead just now? That is hard to say.

I do not think he talked, and I am sure he did not write, for that is hard to do, and if he had done it he could have left some light bright notes on a piece of bone or stone, like these which I have here in my script, though not of course so wise nor so good.

But he may have made grunts or roars or barks to show how he felt from time to time, when he was pleased by a meal or thought the world had gone all wrong. He could have made war on apes that he did not like, but he could not have held a Peace Talk when war was done, for he had not learnt to say "No," and I do not think he had learnt to strike, that is to say to put down his tools when he was

told to do it, for he had not yet reached so high a pitch of skill.

On the whole it seems hard to guess what this foul old half man did do, but we may like to think that he went out and got a meal half roots and leaves and half bits of beasts which he could kill, and then crouched down and watched his half wife while she cooked the half stuff he had got for her, and then they crooned and groaned one on each side of the fire till dawn came and it was time for him to go out and hunt a bit more and for her to clear up the cave. And then there were the half young apes to be fed and taught how to hunt and carve and light fires with two sticks that they rubbed till the sparks flew out, and to be whipped and put to bed. What a life to be sure!

How much did he lack in this half world of his, and what have we got that he had not?

He had no art. He could not paint sad daubs, nor make vile sounds with wood or strings or brass, and if he danced he did not do it well. He had few crafts; no wheels nor sails, nor use of oil and steam, and wool. He could not stand in queues for hose made out of coal, nor blow smoke in and out of his lungs, nor fill up forms all day and night, nor hear if there was to be more bread next month or no, nor work out pools.

If Smith and Brown were here to help me with this script, they could tell you ten times more things that the half ape could not do in the Ice Age than I have told, for they have just come back from the Far East with bits of his bones and teeth in their black bags, and much good may they do to the world with them.

But I do not think the Ice Age Half Man Ape caught colds like Smith and Brown. His brow was low, but he had far more sense than that. I think he lay by his fire, and snored till spring.

EVORE.

The Great Decision

THE morning sounds the stroke of nine,
The air is lanced with rain,
And this tobacco-pouch of mine
Is empty once again.

Then must I forth upon the quest,
Though specialists implore
That I should give my wind a rest
And puff my wreath no more?

Then must I forth, nor heed the cries
From my immortal soul
That calls on me to exercise,
For once, some self-control?

Each day my serried offspring plead
Their hopes of being fed,
And still shall that malodorous weed
Engross my purse instead?

The weary question haunts me yet,
I know not what to say:
Shall I go forth into the wet,
Or shall I cadge all day? M. H. L.



PIRATE COAL

"All right—but I shall stage a come-back!"



"Goodness knows where they find their live ammunition."

A Day's Snipe-Shooting

IT'S many years now since old Michael Rafferty said to the late Lord Rathcool at the far edge of Turraghoooley red bog (and of course he was quite young then), "It was not such a bad day, my lord, after all. I seen better. Aye, many's the time. But eighteen snipe is not bad, and all full snipe."

"You promised me over twenty," said Lord Rathcool.

"Aye, and so there would have been," said Mick Rafferty, "if your lordship had shot a bit straighter. But, sure, you shot well enough, and eighteen snipe is a nice little bag."

That must have been forty years ago.

And thirty years ago he said to him one day: "Does your lordship remember that day we had on the Turraghoooley bog, when you shot twenty-eight snipe, with the wind in our faces like a knife made out of ice? and you never missed more nor one or two in the whole day."

And about ten years after that, when Lord Rathcool was complaining to him one day that he was getting old, Rafferty said to him, "Sure, I see no sign of it. But no man could always shoot like he used to. And no man in the living world, your lordship nor anyone else, could shoot the way you did that day when we went over Turraghoooley bog; and the hail was hitting our faces and bouncing off them, and you shot fifty-eight snipe without ever missing one."

And a few years after that the old Lord Rathcool died, and Rafferty dressed himself up and went to the funeral and was very much upset. One or two people kindly looked after him when it was over, and gave him a glass of whiskey to pull him together, and he said, "Ah, no one ever shot like his lordship, nor ever will again. And I mind the time, as if it were yesterday, when I was walking with him over the Turraghoooley bog, and the hail was the size of pebbles hitting our faces, and he shot two hundred and eighty snipe, nor ever missed a single one."

And it was only the other day that, hearing of this story, and being interested in snipe-shooting, I asked if I could see old Mick Rafferty and have a bit of a talk with him. This was easily arranged, and, for those who may be interested in snipe-shooting like myself, I write down here the story I had from him while it is still fresh in my memory. "Ah, the old lord. Sure, there was no one like him. And I remember the old things that happened long ago, clearer nor what I remember the things that happened last week. Everything that happened in them days I remember as clear as if I could see them now. Ah, God be with the old days. But I was telling you about the old lord. Well, there was a day when I went out with him over the Turraghoooley bog. I was his keeper in them days, and he would never go out with anyone only me. And I remember there

was a hail-storm raging in our faces and the hailstones was as large as hen's eggs; aye, and many of them larger; and his lordship shot five hundred snipe without ever missing one, or ever wounding one either; as I know, who had to pick them all up."

"That's a fine bag for one bog," I said to Rafferty.

"Ah, sure, in those days the bogs was packed with them," he replied. "They was getting up everywhere."

"I wonder you didn't run out of cartridges," I said, in order to stimulate him to say anything more that he might remember of this remarkable shoot.

"And so we did," said Rafferty. "We ran out of them when we had got no more nor four hundred snipe. But I says to the old lord, 'Hit them with your gun.' And he takes his gun by the end of the barrels, and hits every snipe as it comes by pursued by the hail, every one of them on the back of its neck. And so we gets five hundred snipe. Did you ever have to carry five hundred snipe in a bag?"

I said that I never had.

"It's no light weight," said Rafferty, "even when you have run out of cartridges. But, ah, God be with them days."

ANON.

Sticky Wicket for Plato

MR. DICK had no such difficulty with his memorandum as I shall have in attempting to keep the Brisbane Gluepot out of this short essay on Ancient Greece.

I wanted to write about Greece, after reading a "Popular History" of it called *Zito Hellas* which has just been published. It is by Mr. C. E. Robinson, that same Mr. Robinson whose more detailed and rather less popular *History of Greece* used to be found (and I dare say still is) in the "upper forms of public schools." And it seems to me to be an excellent book. For the untutored barbarian, who never learnt any Greek history at all, it gives a very good quick picture of what the Greeks thought about and wrote about and what they made and how they organized themselves, with a nicely-moderated sprinkling of names of men and places. While for cultured readers like myself, who have forgotten more Greek history than Grote ever did, there is the rich delight of coming again upon such names as Cleon and Nikias and reflecting with astonishment that all that business about the Sicilian Expedition is still going on. What fools the Athenians were not to complete the northerly section of the wall before Gylippus got in!

And what a batsman Alcibiades would have made! The Athenian answer to Compton. If I had to pick a Greek team, an all-Greek team, I mean, disregarding the narrow limits of space and time—to play against XXII of Persepolis, say—Alcibiades would be my first choice. But not as captain. The Athenians would have made Alcibiades and Nikias joint captains, with power to co-opt Lamachus on the committee, and we should have had the dismal spectacle of Nikias delaying the declaration because of an eclipse of the moon and finally getting his side hopelessly bogged-down on a glue-pot in their second innings, while Alcibiades hastily signed up with Persepolis. My own choice would be Aristides (not mentioned by Mr. Robinson, who has got tired, I suppose, of describing him as "the Just"), a good leader, commanding general confidence, absolutely unselfish—remember how he stood down at Marathon?—and a sheet-anchor at No. 4. Many, I know, will press the claims of Achilles, and I should be the first to admit that for sheer brilliance in attack and defence, not to mention his speed in the outfield, Peleus' mighty son had no equal. But I am doubtful about his fitness; the old

tendon trouble might blow up again at any moment. And much more important, to my mind, is the desirability of avoiding any Incidents. His warmest admirers cannot deny that Achilles was a bit touchy, and the last thing we want is the captain sulking in the pavilion because of some rather too outspoken dispatch from Therites.

Mr. Robinson gives little help in the selection of the rest of the team, and I am not going to expose myself to a long correspondence with scholars by attempting to choose from the wealth of talent available, beyond remarking that Ajax must be in for his fast bowling and Odysseus (the Rhodes of antiquity) could be relied on to tie up any batsman, given the slightest assistance from the pitch—just as surely as Pallas, a woman who did not hesitate to trip up Ajax in the foot-race (amid the offal of the lowing kine at that, you will remember), could be relied on to doctor the pitch for him overnight. I should also like to see Epaminondas given a trial. He seems to me to have a good cricketing name—

Epaminondas (Thebes) not out 86

—and was a prominent supporter, as students of history will recall, of the Arcadian League.

Pindar will write an account of the games exclusively for the *Bæotian Herald*. And here I should like to say that far from making too much fuss of our cricketers (I am referring now to Hammond of the glancing bat and his well-greaved myrmidons), we treat them positively shabbily in comparison with the honours accorded by the Greeks to their athletic representatives. Quite apart from the fact that the foremost poet of his day delighted to exercise his utmost skill in praise of those who did well at the Games (while I have yet to hear that Mr. Masfield is at work on an ode to Edrich), let me draw your attention to the distinctions conferred on a victor at the Olympic Games when he returned home. Statues of him were erected in the market place; a place of honour was given him at all public spectacles; he was in general exempted from public taxes, and (at Athens) was boarded at the expense of the State in the Prytaneion. How long this went on I am unable to say; you had to give up your rooms at the Prytaneion, presumably, at the end of four years when the next contests were held. But no one will deny that the winners got a pretty decent reception, still less maintain that anything of the sort will come Hammond's way whether he returns with the Ashes or not. I cannot see Mr. Dalton moving that the spoils of his victory over the Nelson family be set aside to provide seventeen free dress-circle seats at all West End theatres and a two-year lease of some desirable block of flats at present occupied by the Ministry of Food. It would be cruel to encourage our men to hope for any remission of taxes on their return. As for statues, I am not even in favour of them. A fine clamour there would be as soon as the preliminary designs appeared in the papers: "Hutton's bat is obviously several sizes too small for him, and why, may one ask, is this fine defensive player to be portrayed attempting a wild hook at a ball which, to judge from the position of the batsman's head, must clearly have pitched well up on the off-stump?"

I take these facts about the rewards of Greek athletes not from Mr. Robinson but from another reliable source. Mr. Robinson contents himself with the remark that victors at the Games were fêted by the whole population on their return and rewarded with free meals for life at the public expense. *For life!* So I was wrong about the four-year tenancy at the Prytaneion. The place must have been full to the brim, with ancient athletes contending that the *pankration* was no longer what it used to be in their day. We have somewhat similar clubs in this country, of course, but they are not yet State-owned. H. F. E.

At the Play

"TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES" (NEW)

EVEN the most allergic to the dramatized novel, of whom, to be honest, I am one, will have to admit Mr. RONALD GOW has gone a long way towards capturing the essence of Hardy's story. It has had to be drastically telescoped and some of the richness of the fabric was bound to suffer in the process, but most of what matters is here. *Tess* comes through in all her glowing peasant integrity. *Angel* is as credible a character as he is in the book (how many of us can ever quite forgive his insufferable priggishness, even in the light of his later behaviour?), and *Alec* is a Victorian seducer without becoming to our perverse eyes a figure of fun. There has been no need to add dramatic incident; if Hardy had cared to enter the Maria Martin school of fiction he could easily have led the field. *Tess* slowly picking up the knife from the breakfast-table to the sound of the D'Urberville coach, while *Alec* affects to study the fat-stock prices in *The Times*, *Tess* left alone in the creaking manor house after *Angel* has rushed out into the storm to have the worst of ten rounds with his conscience, *Tess* walking gravely down from Stonehenge as the sun comes up over the Vale of the Great Dairies—no dramatist could ask for better curtains. The language has had to be trimmed a little for the theatre, but it is still at any rate near-Hardy.

Mr. Gow has cut in at the evening of the wedding and the confessions; this fills the first act. The second, in three scenes, shows *Tess* back at home, with *Alec* once more in pursuit; *Tess* visited by *Angel* in the lodgings at Sandbourne, where she kills *Alec*; and her reunion with *Angel* at the station. The third act is devoted to their brief pilgrimage through Wessex and ends with her capture. We lose Hardy's finer end in which *Angel* and *Liza-Lu* watch the black flag run up on Winton-caster gaol, but that obviously had to be jettisoned.

The Bristol Old Vic Company, produced by Mr. HUGH HUNT, show

real distinction. Unfortunately they were only staying in London for one week. They would have been welcome for much longer. Miss WENDY HILLER is admirably true to *Tess*; fresh, natural, honest and, in its best sense (touching the imagination rather than the boots) earthy. *Tess's* agonies with *Alec* and the completed happiness of her brief idyll with *Angel* she puts over very well indeed, and in unflinching dialect. In *Angel*, Mr. WILLIAM DEVLIN has a tough part, but he triumphs; I almost got to like the creature. Mr. JOHN BAILEY deals firmly with *Alec*, and Miss EVERLEY

similarly to a modern point of view. The verse need worry nobody. It is so up-to-date that it is quite unnoticeable except as an opportunity for a slightly heightened speech which lends itself well to flights of irony and to occasional vertiginous dips into bathos. The whole thing is as light as a *soufflé* made with real eggs, and it is beautifully served up by Mr. NOEL WILLMAN, the producer. Nor is there too much of it.

The widow of a civil servant of Ephesus (who must have been, judging from her notion of a simple suttie gown, at least a Principal Assistant

Secretary) decides to fast to death in her husband's tomb. Accompanying her in this touching gesture of fidelity is her maid, a wanton fired by the glamour of a heroic and no doubt well-publicized end. Well, third-party risks are notoriously heavy, and when a handsome young corporal on guard over the bodies of some Ephesian gentlemen recently hanged climbs down into the tomb to eat his supper, the divine underwriters may reach for their cheque-books at once; more especially as he has with him a generous flask of Samos wine, the very thing to expose the fallacies in martyrdom and restore a sense of proportion to the wilting widow. She puts up a prolonged and eloquent resistance, not so much to the corporal, a most honourable youth, but to the electric atmosphere in which they are

both caught up; but the underwriters are already signing their names and, the only hitch left being the disappearance of one of the corporal's charges—a crime for which he is likely to take the missing man's place on the gallows—we are not surprised to see the widow pointing a practical finger at her husband's tomb. For it could have given so meticulous a bureaucrat nothing but pleasure to regularize a little thing like that, at so trifling a cost to his own convenience.

The acting is delightful. Miss HERMIONE HANNEN, looking irresistible in a riot of yellow weeds, presents the ebb and flow of the widow's emotions with uncommon subtlety. Down to the last flick of her eyelashes she seems to have taped Mr. FRY's malicious intentions. Mr. PAUL SCOFIELD, who showed at Stratford this



NIGHT LIFE "SLIGHTLY BELOW GROUND"

Tegeus-Chromis	Mr. PAUL SCOFIELD
Dynamene	MISS HERMIONE HANNEN
Doto	MISS JOAN WHITE

GREGG paints old Mrs. Durbeyfield in the unfading colours of port-and-lemon. One question: Mr. KENNETH CONNOR's *Stationmaster* would be a comic asset on any platform, even that at Newark, but why make him up like a member of the Mafia?

"A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT" (ARTS)

I missed this when it was at the Mercury earlier in the year, and am now very glad to have seen it. No brighter piece of highbrow-lowbrow entertainment has arrived since the war. It is in verse, they say, but in spite of that *Amphitryon 39* comes to mind not merely because this is also an Attic romp but because Mr. CHRISTOPHER FRY's approach to love has the same satiric flavour and his pungent wit gears a pagan background

summer of what good stuff he is made, gives the corporal a sturdy gravity more winning than any wile. And as the maid Miss JOAN WHITE makes a fine foil, whether she is dilating in the accents of S.E.3 on the ephemeral nature of passion or merely hiccupping "The Master!" as she swigs from the flask. It is all very cynical, very graceful and very funny. There was no difficulty in telling which of the audience had lately left His Majesty's service, for the corporal's anxiety about his dereliction from the rigid path of K.R.s met with an immediate and overwhelming response.

"THE LOWER DEPTHS"
(A.D.C., CAMBRIDGE)

The title is perfect. To a large basement in which a lot of Russian down-and-outs roar, booze, cheat, brawl, scratch, solicit, droop and die to their hearts' content comes a Christian tramp, and the play shows his attempts to introduce a little human kindness. Unfortunately his good influence evaporates when he moves on, leaving most of the inmates rather worse off, except for several who are dead, and leaving us wondering what moral, if any, it was Comrade MAXIM GORKY's intention to point. Mr. ALEXANDER BAKSHY's translation may well be faithful but its language is sadly undistinguished. On the plus side, however, there is much on which to congratulate the A.D.C. Mr. ANTHONY KNOWLES has handled this unruly stuff with notable discretion, infusing great fire into his crowd-scenes and showing a keen sense of significant detail (especially in the second half, which is in every way the better); Miss PAT LEITH has done a set of which many London stages would be glad; and, bar the shouting, there is some solid, honest acting, notably by Miss ELVIRA EVANS, Miss MARGARET DEWHIRST, Miss GILLIAN WEBB, Mr. SIEGBERT PRAWER, Mr. LYNDON BROOK and Mr. GEOFFREY BANKS. By the last, in particular. ERIC.

At the Ballet

"MARDI GRAS" (SADLER'S WELLS)

It is probably a reflection of the cataclysmic age in which we live that the excursions of English ballet into the realms of philosophy should be so morbid and heavy with doom. Choreographers seem to have eyes only for the evil in the world. Every cloud has a lining of crape and Death is the only refuge. ROBERT HELPMANN's *Adam*

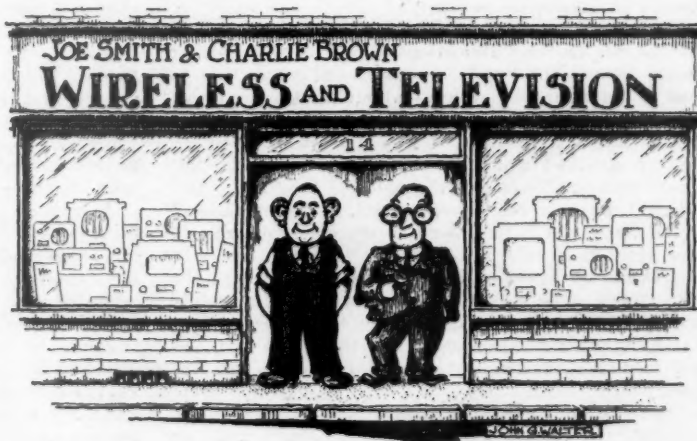
Zero, brilliantly effective though it is, expresses the abhorrent idea that the Destiny of Man is to strive to occupy the centre of Life's stage and achieve success in the eyes of the world before hungry generations yelping after him tread him down into the grave. Now another gifted choreographer, ANDRÉE HOWARD, and the youthful Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet have come along with *Mardi Gras*, a dismal companion piece to *Adam Zero* about the Destiny of Woman.

Mardi Gras symbolizes the unfolding of the life of a young girl (ANNE HEATON). The heroine comes into a cathedral square at midnight during Carnival-tide. In the background is the cathedral door, and the stage is lit with a dull greenish light that gives a ghostly effect. Strange figures in fantastic carnival garb and horrible masks appear and a dance begins round the bewildered girl. One realizes after a few minutes that the cathedral square represents the world and the carnival figures the evil in it—lust, hypocrisy, avarice, callousness and so on. There is a Reveller in White who one thinks will protect the girl from the world, but he fails her. The mob's attention is momentarily distracted by the appearance of a circus dancer on the stage of a booth, who comes down into the street to mingle with the crowd. This dancer and the coarse and lustful negro boxer who soon follows her are strongly reminiscent of the *Doll* and the *Moor in Petrouchka*. The boxer seizes the terrified girl; who struggles violently to escape. A boy appears who fights the boxer, but he gets killed so she is once more left defenceless. The mob in carnival dress gets more menacing and her plight

seems quite desperate when the cathedral door opens and a priest slowly emerges, his robes borne by two acolytes. All the evil figures cringe and hide their faces at his approach. The girl leaps into his arms, which would seem rather embarrassing for the priest but for the fact that this evidently symbolizes her seeking the protection of the Church. She appears to be safe at last, but no. Suddenly the aspect of the priest and acolytes changes and they too assume horrible masks. Even Religion has failed her. Then out of the cathedral door come three sextons, looking exactly like Rasputin. They carry a black coffin, which they prop against the steps and open to reveal to the horrified eyes of the girl—herself, lying dead. The Rasputin brothers close the coffin again and the curtain slowly descends.

HUGH STEVENSON, who was also responsible for the scenario, has designed some extremely successful costumes for this ballet. They strike just the right note of fantasy and nightmarishness. ANDRÉE HOWARD's choreography, and her management of the crowd of revellers, are both ingenious and effective, though she is not greatly helped by LEONARD SALZEDO's rather uninspiring music.

We may be old-fashioned and "escapist," but we did wish that something nice would happen to the girl—that she could find Love, or find her Soul, or find something or somebody even if it was only a policeman to arrest the boxer, instead of meeting nothing but buffetings and disillusionment and the Rasputin triplets at her own funeral. Even *Adam Zero* came off better than this. It is all too dismal for words. D. C. B.





"Blowing up for another electricity cut, I'm afraid."

Tutankhamen at the Console

IF anyone had told me only a short time ago that I should be guilty of an act of benevolence towards players of the theatre organ I should have uttered a derisive laugh, with all my stops out. But all the old values change; the mantle of Amanda M'Kitttrick Ros seems to have descended upon the shoulders of the Chairman of a Rent Tribunal; and here am I, discussing a new book compiled without any regard for fine language but merely (as its editor writes in an accompanying note) to counteract unfavourable publicity.

The book is *Theatre Organ World*, published at 21s. by Theatre Organ World Publications in aid of the Theatre Organists' Benevolent Fund . . . and I am aware that to the load of unfavourable publicity about the theatre organ (or cinema organ, as it seems to be wrong to call it) I have in the past added my straw. I won't go so far as to say that in this article I will take my straw away again, but I might blow a bubble or two through it.

Though I haven't read every word, some of those I have read have stuck. Fastest has stuck the opening of the contribution by Mr. H. Robinson Cleaver. He calls it "The Organ at Home and Away," and begins with the remark "What strange reading the above caption would make to the ancient Egyptians if they were alive to-day. Why the Egyptians? Because it was they who first discovered that one person could perform on two flutes at the same time."

The implication is that from this it is a mere step, in seven-league flutes, to the number performed on

simultaneously by the person in charge of (for instance) the B.B.C. Theatre Organ, from the specification of which in this book I pick such wonders as the thirty-two-foot Acoustic Bass, the eight-foot Tuba Mirabilis, the Snare Drum, the Sand Block, the Tom-Tom, the four-foot Orchestral Strings, the Sleigh Bells, the Police Whistle and the Siren. What I want to do is to watch the ancient Egyptians listening to that lot.

(Their reiterated invocation of Ra, the Sun-God, would of course be taken for a college yell, one of the few effects of which the B.B.C. Theatre Organ seems to be incapable; but we'll cross that bridge when the ancient Egyptians come to it.)

This versatile heap of appliances is, by the way, the very same instrument as Mr. Reginald Foort's celebrated travelling organ, which he took about the country with him (as he describes here) in five enormous lorries and has now sold to the B.B.C. to replace their original one which was bombed. Just now I quoted a few treasures from the official specification, which occupies two pages of three closely-printed columns each; but you should hear Mr. Foort's description—Mr. Foort, who had the thing specially built for him and knows what to be impressed by. "There never has been another organ like it, ever!" he writes with shining eyes, and in the next sentence but one, with the air of a Lucullus recommending cherries, he points out that "All the tonal percussions are genuine Deagan and all the non-tonal genuine Leedy."

What this means, precisely, I don't know, and the Glossary of Technical Terms at the end of the volume doesn't in this instance help; though it explains many other problems, and raises more. For instance, it will begin disarmingly by telling you that the Combination Pistons are "The little white buttons situated directly under each keyboard," or that the Toe Pistons are "A series of metal knobs"; but into its explanation of the Acoustic Bass it will throw such a parenthesis as "A genuine 32 ft.-long Bombarde, however (mitred at the top), despite its very slow vibrations acoustically, can be discerned as emitting a distinct tone—provided it be placed on at least 25-inch wind pressure." To this I am not sure whether to reply "Fancy!" or (waving an irritable hand) "Yes, yes, yes."

One thing I am glad to have learned from the Glossary is the meaning of the word "Console." I had always thought "console" meant the *seat*, the often cubical erection with the polished leather cushion let into it, from which many a cinema organist makes that gracious sideways bow, or Renal Writhe, which looks as if it may be beneficial to one of his kidneys. But I find from the Glossary that it means the whole cockpit, complete with what one writer here rather happily calls the "fruit jelly" moulded effects at the sides: "the massive case encompassing the keyboards, stop tablets and the activating circuits and the mechanism"; the switchboard, the engine-room, the report centre. When you "embark upon the console" (a phrase used by one contributor) you do not merely sit down: you take the plunge, you assume responsibility, you very nearly make an oath of allegiance.

As well as the articles I have mentioned the book contains about sixty (I said about sixty) others, besides a biographical dictionary of personalities in the organ world. And there is page after glossy page of photographs of organists, male and female, in evening dress and chiaroscuro, in action and in contemplation, some of them smiling from the consoles on which they have embarked, others caught at closer range and staring straight at you (with a hint of hidden fires) from a foot or two away. Not one of them looks like an ancient Egyptian; not one is even mitred at the top.

R. M.



"Better paint a bit of 'olly round it for the festive season."

Nylons This Way!

THERE! Did you see that?" fumed Albert, lashing madly at the counter with his string bag.

I shall not do my Christmas shopping with him again. He is so captious in a crowd.

"I took a fancy to that doll as soon as I see it," he grumbled. He was in a thoroughly bad temper.

"Then why didn't you buy it?" I asked.

"That there woman snatched it from right under me hands!" he shouted indignantly.

Albert had been fussing like this all the morning, and I felt it time to rebuke him.

"You will vacillate so," I said sharply. "If you make up your mind quickly and snatch first you'll get what you want."

"How can I?" he protested. "I can't even turn me head round in this 'ere collar!"

"I warned you before you came that those excessively high collars aren't worn in the West End any more. Why don't you tuck your ears inside it?"

"I've tried that, but I find I can't hear properly," he complained peevishly. "But it ain't the collar—it's all these women snatching and pushing and shoving that provokes me."

He did some frantic elbow work as the crowd swirled and pinned him against a show-case.

"It's the Christmas rush, Albert. You must be patient."

"Patient! While they snatch everything out of me hands?" he shouted, scuffling furiously between two dear old ladies. "It's these 'ere women; men would know better!"

"Nonsense, Albert. I have the greatest admiration for the fair sex; 'ministering angels,' all of them."

"That's because you ain't suffered from 'em like I have," he scowled.

"Look at the charming way that young lady apologized just now when she knocked your hat over your eyes!"

"Yes, and while I was putting me hat straight she walked off with a scarf I had me eye on."

"Tut-tut, Albert! I won't hear a word against the ladies."

"Ho, you won't, won't you?" said Albert darkly. "Let's go over to that archway, and I'll show you what women really are."

I flowed smoothly through the crowd with Albert in my wake.

"Now watch," he said, peeping round a corner. "We'll take cover behind this counter."

"Whatever for?"

"NYLONS this way!" he roared. "This way for NYLONS!"

Albert admitted afterwards that he had no idea what wild primitive forces he was unleashing. Dense masses of women stampeded and charged by us, their faces set hard, the light of battle in their eyes. The cry of "Nylons" flew from department to department. Fresh hordes thundered from Fancy Leather Goods and Paper Patterns, swept through Lamp Shades and on into Inexpensive Frocks. A white-faced shop-walker, protesting to the last, was cut down and trampled underfoot. I reeled. It was like an abyss opening suddenly at one's feet.

"I would never have believed it," I gasped. "The sheer ferocity of it; those hard glinting eyes, the distorted lips—"

Gradually the turmoil subsided. Crowds wandered back into our department again, listless and strangely quiet. The zest for shopping had gone. Every woman was convinced that she had just missed a pair of nylons. They slapped little children and even derided their husbands' taste in neck-wear. Then a powerfully-built lady approached us and fixed her steely eyes on Albert.

"I seem to remember that collar," she said in a rasping voice, full of bitterness. "Aren't you the man that shouted 'Nylons' just now?"

But Albert had gone. He raced like a greyhound through the crowd into Girls' Outdoor Clothing.

The woman turned to me, but I was not there. I was streaking through Ladies' Aprons and Overalls for the nearest exit.



"Nice to see the place empty again."

An Innocent at Large

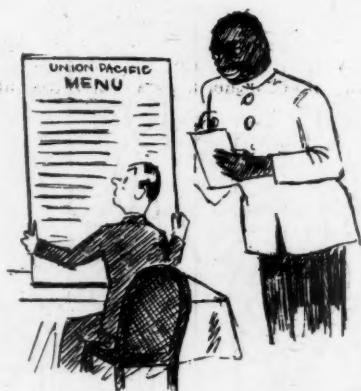
[Mr. Punch's special representative is spending a few months in America to find out what is really happening over there.]

X—The Oregon Trail

AT a guess I should say that the Union Pacific Railroad has more telegraph poles per mile than any British railway, and I suspect that this is part of a clever scheme to create an illusion of speed. I may quite easily be wrong of course, but the facts are that it took forty hours for the Pony Express (with me up) to canter the 1,380 miles from Denver (Colorado) to Los Angeles (California) and yet we always *seemed* to be moving like lubricated lightning.

I like this compromise: it gratifies man's greed for high velocities and rescues him from the mental and physical nausea they beget. To be in New York less than a day after leaving London is a sickening experience. The digestive organs shy at their new loads, the nerves quibble at their new ordeals, the mind rebels against so sudden a switch. Every long-distance traveller by air should be put into quarantine on arrival and subjected to an intensive reconditioning course before liberation. And there should be a pronounced bias towards bicarbonate of soda throughout the syllabus. It *should* take time to journey from Denver (blanketed under thirty inches of snow), north to Cheyenne and the Platte Valley, over the ridges to the ice-cap of Salt Lake City, and down through the dust storms, heat and orange groves to Southern California. My respects to the Union Pacific.

Forty hours are just about long enough for a person to become familiar with his fellow travellers and on nodding terms with the bartender, long enough to master the dietetics of the railroad and the pros and cons of American tipping. A Long Beach broker with an alarming capacity for "Bourbons" (America's answer to the shortage of "Scotch," and pronounced *Birban*) gave me detailed crop reports every dozen miles or so and acted as interpreter during a broadcast commentary on the football-match between the Army and Notre Dame. In return I tried to explain the niceties of soccer and cricket, and quite a crowd



gathered in the club car to see a demonstration of spin-bowling—with a muffin and a rolled copy of the *Denver Post* as playing tackle. Whenever the train stopped everybody bundled out on to where the platform would be in Britain, with the idea of taking a brisk constitutional.

But no sooner had they climbed down than they were queueing to climb back in search of heavier clothing. American trains, like American hotels, offices, shops and homes, are centrally overheated to a suffocating degree. The atmosphere of the club car was stifling, while outside the mercury was right down in the boots of Wyoming and Utah. At Salt Lake City I borrowed scarves, a helmet and an extra overcoat and tramped through the snow to inspect the Mormon Tabernacle and the old beehive houses with their numerous and discreet front- and side-doors. I was told that a swim in the amazingly buoyant lake is an unforgettable experience (you can't sink), but no, I just didn't fancy it. But London's Serpentine Club would love it and every one of its 4,200 feet above sea-level. After a quick glance round the bars I trudged back to the station, eating a little snow occasionally as a sort of memento. It seemed to me that Mormonism had quite a lot to commend it in such weather.

What can you do on a forty-hour rail journey? Well, you study the scenery of course. But even the grandest mountains and wildest deserts become tedious in time. So you try to write all those letters you never quite get down to even when writing is physically a much easier proposition. Your first effort consists of three closely-written pages of descriptive prose, very pasticcio and dramatic, and a hurriedly scrawled tailpiece indicating that you are in a frightful hurry and will write again about the other matter quite soon. The second letter goes into the waste-paper basket a few seconds after you have written: "Dear —, I am writing this (as you can see from the notepaper) in the club car of the 'Pony Express' which, at this moment, is galloping through the passes of the mighty Wasatch Range. The colours are unbelievably..."

Then you read, study maps—and eat. Yes, eating is the chief thing. Once you have the hang of the notices "Dining Car in Other Direction" you seem to be toying with menus almost continually. But you couldn't possibly eat so much without the assistance of the constant vibration. Shake an apparently full sack of logs and you'll see what I mean. Or tap a cigarette rhythmically against your thumb-nail and see what happens to the tobacco. Most Americans seem to breakfast off orange juice, a patent cereal food (which provides its own tympanic accompaniment and could, no doubt, be eaten under water) and ham or bacon and eggs. Potatoes, toast, muffins and marmalade are added as makeweights and vitamin tablets are swallowed as an afterthought, just in case. Buckwheat cakes or waffles may be substituted for the main dish. Whenever I complained about the immensity of these meals I was told: "But, then, you English never ate very much even before the war, did you?" In a Chicago coffee-shop I asked, almost begged, for just *one* egg. But the counterman explained that the frying mechanism wouldn't work unless two eggs were used—something about production costs and man-hours. Anyway, I *had* to take two eggs.

In an earlier article I attacked our British way with coffee; now I must make the scores all square by inveighing against American tea. So far I have consumed but one cup of real tea (a genuinely nice cuppa) and that was brewed at a British Consulate. In hotels I am brought a little muslin bag of tea and a teapot, without a lid, full

of lukewarm water. I dip the bag into the water and hope for the best. Once, when I complained, I was invited to take tea in an American home. My hostess brewed it almost as it should be brewed—except that she forgot the one for the pot. It was hot, fresh and medium-strong . . . but *scented*. It was like drinking bath-salts. American tea, by the way, is only a little worse than American decaffeinated coffee, a drink which is supposed to be easy on the nerves. To me it tasted like decaffeinated grit with a nasty tang of hydrogen.

On the last night out from Los Angeles we talked of politics and the elections, but nobody got very excited. Most people thought there would be a depression before 1948, but not a very serious one. I heard more of the voluntary curtailment of demand which has struck terror into the turnover figures of many industrialists recently. It appears that housewives are refusing to accept the present range of prices as reasonable. In Omaha I heard a woman say to a grocer "How much? Then we'll starve first!" New Yorkers, too, are holding out against the inflated tickets on the hats, suits and dresses in Fifth Avenue. Bell-hops (according to one report) are "being dined out of existence," which, interpreted, means that tips are getting smaller. Tipping in America is a difficult business. Theoretically there is no class system and Jack is just a little better than his master. So tips, however large,* bring no show of gratitude. The only noticeable reaction I have encountered has been on those occasions when I have mistaken cents for dimes and given twopence instead of half-a-crown. They unbend a little then. By



"The dimes are slightly smaller than the cents."

the way, when we stopped at Caliente the waiter obeyed the rules and regulations of the State of Nevada and would serve no drinks. But it was all right, as it were, as soon as the train was in motion again.

We crossed the Mojave Desert in the early morning and I studied the Joshua and yucca trees with awe and wonder. They looked like film props. Then a stiff climb (with the telegraph poles almost touching) to Summit and more snow, and the long interminable descent to the fruit gardens of California. The orange groves and vineyards were hidden by a dust-storm as thick and impenetrable as

*And my experiments have now been completed.

a pea-soup fog in London, and the magic of land-reclamation was made apparent and spectacular.

I know it is silly of me, but even now, right at the end of this article, I find great difficulty in telling you that I was



mistaken by my fellow-travellers for a British film-star! You see . . . oh, no, honestly I couldn't . . . well, all right then, but you must promise not to laugh. It happened when I was explaining cricket to the Long Beach broker. (Remember?) I talked about methods of scoring and mentioned byes. Naturally I used the word "extras" quite a lot and thought nothing of it at the time. But a little later I saw people muttering and throwing shy glances at me—nice, warm glances. Then somebody bought me a drink and started chatting about Laurence Olivier, David Niven, Rex Harrison and J. Arthur Rank. I supported my countrymen with a familiarity that is not difficult upon such occasions. A chance meeting, long ago, with one of these celebrities was magnified to a close friendship, almost a partnership, and somebody plied me with another Birban.

Two younger women who sat opposite were obviously puzzled and suspicious. Above the hubbub of small-talk and orders I caught words like "bit-player," "Rin Tin Tin," "noggin" and "stand-in." Fortunately we were then near San Bernardino, not far enough from Los Angeles to make the deception worth practising under difficulties. So I casually mentioned my profession and let it go at that.

Nothing very unkind was said, but I was the last person, as it happened, to get either a porter or a taxi at the Los Angeles Union Station.

HOD.

Recreations

IN Oxford, men will sometimes take
An hour or two from books to slake
Their thirst for beer, or talk, or fun,
Or idle lounging in the sun,
Then back with some reluctance go
To Sophocles or Cicero.

But Cairo students seem to take
So many hours to go and break
Policemen's heads, or else to throw
A playful hand-grenade or so,
I can't help wondering how these
Gay lads find time to take degrees.



"'Electrification,' they says: and gone, gone is the wonder and romance of the Iron Road!"

Keeping Up Appearances

THIS is me coming down to dinner.
I did not look so very different, did I,
before the war?

Perhaps I am a little thinner?
I have some new wrinkles and my hair is greyer,
but not much more.

I am wearing a red velvet coat,
and although it is smelling strongly of moth-balls,
it is still gay.
This brooch now, nestling at my throat,
I got it out of its little vault in the bank
the other day,
and I found these shoes, not too down at heel,
in the back of the cupboard wrapped in black paper.
So here I am

coming downstairs for the evening meal.
But do not say oh! or look too closely at me,
for I'm a sham.

I may seem to you to be pre-war,
but though you may think this, and I love you for it,
I know better.

For one thing I'm stockingless, and for
another I have on, under this velvet coat,
a blue sweater,
and under that a thick woolly vest.
(That is why, you see, my brooch is pinned so high up.)

I don't know why
I tell you this, save that I think it best
you should remember appearances are deceptive,
and women lie.

V. G.



KEEP THE RUHR FIRES BURNING.

"Well, Sam, it's something to have two working together."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, December 2nd.—House of Commons: Mr. Speaker Scores a Century.

Tuesday, December 3rd.—House of Commons: The Nelson Touch.

Wednesday, December 4th.—House of Commons: Money Talks.

House of Lords: Religious Freedom.

Thursday, December 5th.—House of Commons: A Churchill Circus.

Monday, December 2nd.—Over in Australia, Britain and Australia were locked in what lady novelists used to call "deadly combat" on the cricket-field, engaged in Test matches. Rain had stopped play (as is not unusual in other lands than Australia) and no centuries cheered the hearts of the enthusiasts.

But in the heart of London Town, in the Royal Palace of Westminster, that great sportsman, Colonel DOUGLAS CLIFTON BROWN, Speaker of the House of Commons, was clearly out for a century on his own account. He was after a century of questions. And when Mr. Speaker sets out to gain an objective—well, Mr. Speaker usually gains it.

To-day was no exception. The Order Paper was crowded with questions, some good, some—less good. But, by the rules of the House, all have to be asked, if their askers are present. Like any good innings it all started quietly, with Mr. Speaker calling name after name and Ministers bobbing up and down to reply—all very normal. Then, after a time, the pace quickened. Mr. Speaker spotted a spinner coming from an honourable Member (in the form of an unnecessarily word-spinning query) and he acted. He flicked the needless query to the boundary, leaving the disappointed bowler looking astonished and mortified, and the batting Minister grinning happily.

Next he scored a boundary by calling on several Members in succession, finding them absent, and going straight on.

Then he snatched a few neat singles by nipping in swiftly the moment the Minister completed his reply and before slower-thinking Members had time to compose supplementary questions. A little later, with a mighty swipe, he got another boundary (right out of the field, in fact) by skipping another half-dozen questioners who had not taken the trouble to be present. And so . . . to ninety-nine.

Breathless and expectant, the House waited. The asker of Question No. 100

was called—but was not present. No ball.

"Mr. Butler!" called Colonel CLIFTON BROWN.

Mr. RAB BUTLER rose and announced "No. 101, sir!" and there was a roar of cheers. So, on to No. 113, and Mr. Speaker got a resounding cheer all to himself when the innings ended.

There have, in truth, been many more interesting Question-hours from the verbal point of view, but few more interesting from the sporting. Modestly acknowledging the plaudits of the



DIPPING INTO THE FUTURE

Lord Vansittart surveys the prospects of Western Europe.

crowd, Mr. Speaker declared the innings closed and the House turned its attention to a debate on cotton.

It was a "narky" sort of discussion, with witty Mr. OLIVER LYTTETTON and witty Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS metaphorically hacking each other's figurative shins at frequent intervals. Your scribe had no idea how inflammable a thing cotton could be until this debate began.

There was so much talk about "Futures" that a number of American visitors in the Gallery thought they had strayed into an Astrologers' Convention, but actually it referred to the Liverpool Cotton Futures Market. It seems that the Government intends to

close the market down and to take over the whole thing itself. Mr. LYTTETTON thought this a silly idea, and he said so at some length and with much eloquence.

Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, on the other hand, thought it a good idea, and said so at some length and with much eloquence. In between, many other Members expressed their views, mostly with but little eloquence but at some length.

In the end the Bill received a Second Reading by 291 votes to 144. A vote more decisive than Sir STAFFORD's words might seem to suggest the measure itself to be, for he commented that when the Bill had been tried out "we shall see whether it is good or bad."

A little later the House was counted out—there were thirty-nine present, and it takes forty to make a quorum.

Tuesday, December 3rd.—Mr. DALTON, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that the British and United States Governments had agreed to amalgamate their occupation zones in Germany and to work together to bring that defeated land back to respectable and non-aggressive commercial and economic prosperity. It would cost some £250,000,000, over three years, to achieve this, and we and the United States were to share the burden equally.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN expressed a desire to debate the plan, and there the matter was left for the present.

Flicking aside one brief and taking up another—like a fashionable "silk" in full action, Mr. DALTON at once plunged into a learned (and most movingly delivered) account of the death of Horatio, Viscount Nelson, in the hour of victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.

It struck some Members as a trifle odd that so moving an account of the last moments of the national hero should be the prelude to a demand that the perpetual pension granted to his heirs by a grateful nation should be cancelled. Mr. DALTON argued that gratitude really did not come into the matter, since the dying Nelson's last thoughts were for Lady Hamilton and for his daughter Horatia. As the one had been allowed to die in a Calais garret and to be buried in a pauper's grave and the other had got along as best she could as the wife of a parson, it did not seem to him that the nation need express permanent gratitude (to the tune of some thousands a year) to the collateral heirs.

So it was proposed to extinguish the pension when the present holder of the title and his heir, both octogenarians,

ceased to draw it. The Chancellor sat down and listened for several hours while indignant Conservatives described his proposal as "a paltry bit of meanness," "breach of contract," and so on. Then the Chancellor's able lieutenant, Mr. WILL GLENVIL HALL, wound up the debate and counter-attacked by calling the pension an anachronism. Anyway, said Mr. HALL, the Nelson family had drawn £285,000 since a proposal to commute the pension was last made.

Such unreasonable conduct by the Nelsons sent the Government's supporters crowding into the division lobby to defeat a Conservative motion to continue the pension. And in doing so they robbed themselves of one of their favourite means of reviving flagging speeches on political platforms—a few well-worn remarks about the perpetual pensioners.

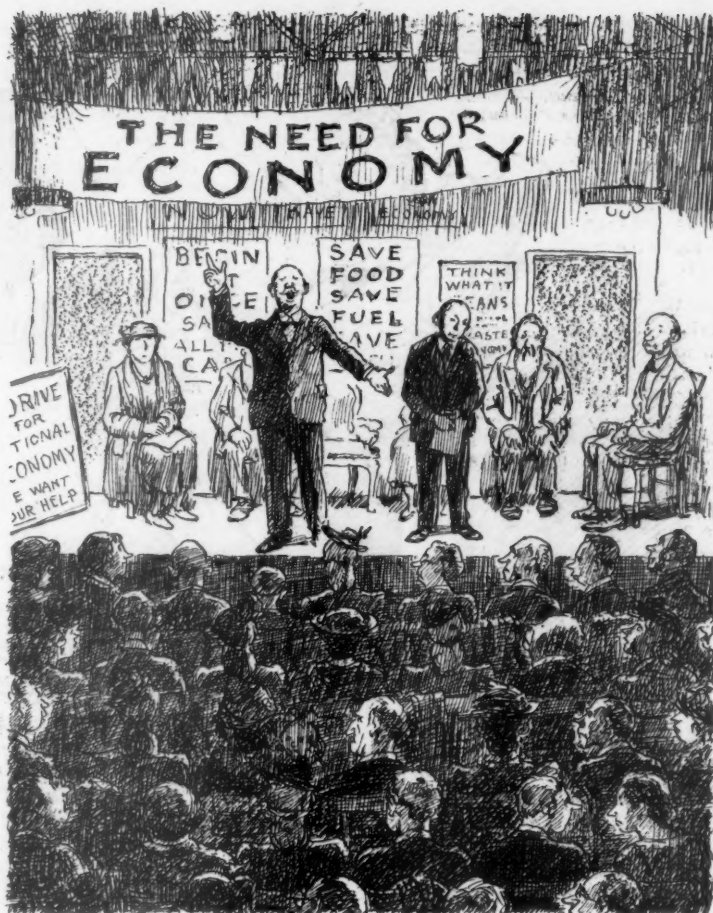
Wednesday, December 4th.—The House of Lords was deeply moved to-day by a discussion on religious freedom—and the lack of it in too many lands. The Archbishop of York raised the matter, and declared that no Government, least of all that of freedom-loving Britain, could be a neutral in this question of freedom. He wanted something positive done to emphasize that fact.

Lord JOWITT, the Lord Chancellor, replied that the British Government certainly did not want to be neutral in the matter, and he proclaimed that Britain stood where all the world expected her to stand—in the forefront of those who defended freedom, whether civil or religious.

It was one of those little debates which leave a deep impression of sincerity on the hearer—and which emphasize the value of an assembly like the House of Peers, where Party considerations play but the feeblest of parts.

In the Commons, Mr. DAVID ECCLES grew almost tearfully eloquent in defence of the words "sterling area." Apparently the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philistine that he is, proposes to alter the phrase to "scheduled territories," and Mr. ECCLES, wearing the expression of a martyr, pleaded that so foul an act be not perpetrated. But the Chancellor, folding his arms like a stage villain, insisted on his pound of phrase. Mr. ECCLES was bravely silent.

Tough stuff having failed, Mr. OLIVER STANLEY tried the cooing method, telling Mr. GLENVIL HALL, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, that "other Ministers might not be so reasonable as he." But Mr. HALL, while bowing gracefully in acknow-



"... and I have much pleasure in calling for one and a half hearty cheers for our lecturer."

ledgment of the implied compliment, stuck to his point. Mr. STANLEY had not the heart to withdraw his compliment.

But a little later Mr. HALL gave an assurance that it would not be an offence, under the Exchange Control Bill they were debating, to have a golden sovereign on one's watch-chain, or even to retain an unpierced sovereign for sentimental reasons. Mr. ECCLES and Mr. STANLEY seemed but little appeased.

The Prime Minister announced that it was intended to try to control the atom bomb, and a little later that atom bomb of debate, Mr. WALTER ELLIOT, newly returned as a Conservative for the Scottish Universities, was introduced—showing no signs of being under Government control. In fact

he did not seem to be under anybody's control, for he strode manfully up the floor, with his sponsors, Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. JAMES STUART, trailing behind.

Thursday, December 5th.—Mr. CHURCHILL has introduced a new institution to Parliament—the weekly "Churchill Circus." Each Thursday, for weeks past, he has had a tourney with his old colleague Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Leader of the House of Commons.

The occasion is the announcement of the coming week's business, but it is developing into a swift and occasionally acrid survey of the whole political scene. Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. MORRISON take it in turn to score, to the accompaniment of appropriate cheers from the two sides of the House.

It is all very lively and amusing—even if its precise utility is obscure.



"Remember that nice young footballer, dear—the one I always said I could have married? Well, his club have refused to part with him for twenty thousand pounds."

The Transport Bill¹

THIS work, published happily in time for Christmas, is one to which, it is safe to say, the discerning reader will return again and again. Much study will be required before the full purpose of the author, Mr. Barnes, and his collaborators² is revealed, and here we shall attempt no more than a rough preliminary notice.

The price of the work (2s. 6d.), though more than one is accustomed to pay for such productions, is justified, perhaps, by its generous proportions. It has 136 pages, 127 clauses, and thirteen schedules, and the whole is tastefully printed on paper of the familiar discouraging green. The style, on the whole, is an improvement upon previous works of the same character: and the meaning of many passages leaps to the mind with startling clarity. The proof-reading has been well done. There is no index, but an explanatory

memorandum serves as a guide through the jungle of clauses. Purists, by the way, may quarrel with the first sentence in paragraph 2:

"A British Transport Commission . . . are to be established with general powers to carry goods and passengers by rail, road and inland waterway and the provision of port facilities . . ." "And the provision" seems to be, grammatically, in the air.

We note with regret that His Majesty's printers still cling (in Bills) to certain bad habits which they have abandoned elsewhere. For many years we deprecated the superfluous full-point in the headings of *Hansard*, House of Commons Order Papers, White Papers, and, by the way, the great *Punch* himself. It used to be

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER.

and we remember being suspected of frivolity when we put a Question for Oral Answer about those multitudinous meaningless dots. It used to be

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

But now it is

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER
and now it is

PUNCH or The London Charivari

Quietly, without a word (*Punch*, we think, set the example) those multitudinous dots disappeared: and who can say what a saving of ink and manpower has resulted in the immeasurable area of His Majesty's Stationery! But here they go again—

Transport Bill.

And at the top of all the 136 pages is solemnly printed

Transport.

Look at page 131:

10 Geo. 6. Transport. 131

TENTH SCHEDULE. A.D. 1946.

Section 117.

CONSTITUTION OF LEE CONSERVANCY BOARD.

If 6, and 1946 and 117 must be decorated with dots, why is 131 left

¹ His Majesty's Stationery Office—2s. 6d.

² Mr. Herbert Morrison, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Attorney-General and Mr. George Strauss.

naked? (At the top of page 105, by the way, the full-stop has been omitted).

But these are matters which must not be allowed to mar our enjoyment of the substance of the work. The author, Mr. Barnes, must be a proud, though perhaps an apprehensive, man. Others have drawn great pictures of their past: few can have sketched for themselves so vast a future. Mr. Barnes, modestly described as "the Minister", is to have under him a British Transport Commission, a chairman and four others, appointed by him. Then, assisting the Commission, there are to be five "Executives", each of up to nine members, also appointed by him. And between them they are to acquire and manage sixty-six railway undertakings (these are beautifully set out in the Third Schedule—pages 117 and 118) and seventeen "Canal and inland navigation undertakers"; not to mention innumerable wagons.

And then, after they have got everything going, the Minister (page 5, line 36—a delightfully rugged passage which we wish we could quote in full):

"The Minister may, after consultation with the Commission, direct the Commission to discontinue any of their activities . . ."

"Boys," we can hear the breezy Minister cry one morning, "let's not have any more railways! And that goes for inland navigation."

And, of course, we have not mentioned the "long-distance road haulage undertakings". These, too, the Commission are to "acquire". About all this we are a little vague. "Long-distance", we gather, means more than twenty-five miles from your "operating-centre"—a queer definition for the countrymen of Drake and others, but there it is: outside the magic circle of twenty-five miles, none but Mr. Barnes and his Commissions can haul things with efficiency and "proper integration". Others must remain in the circle and go round and round (if licensed so to do).

Perhaps our favourite piece of prose relates to these problems. It is to be found in sub-section (5) of Clause 60, at the bottom of page 65:

"(5) Where an A licence or a B licence was granted before the twenty-eighth-day of November, nineteen hundred and forty-six, and, immediately before that date, the premises from which any vehicle, being an authorized vehicle, was in fact normally used for the purpose of carrying goods for hire or reward were different from the premises specified in the application for the licence, the holder of the

licence may, within the prescribed time, give notice in writing in the prescribed form specifying the premises from which the vehicle was normally so used immediately before that date to the licensing authority within whose area the last-mentioned premises are situate, and if those premises are not situate within the area of the licensing authority by whom the licence was granted, to that licensing authority, and if the first-mentioned licensing authority is satisfied that the vehicle was normally so used from those premises immediately before that date, that authority shall notify the holder accordingly, and those premises shall, as from the date when that authority so notifies the holder, be taken to be the operating centre of the vehicle:

Provided that a notice given by the holder of a licence under this subsection may embody such a request to the first-mentioned licensing authority as is mentioned in subsection (3) of this section, and where such a request is made, that licensing authority may, if he thinks fit, specify as the operating centre for the vehicle any such point in his area as he thinks fit."

Perhaps we ought to know: but in fact we have no notion what an A licence is—or even a B licence; and we feel that somewhere in this work someone should have explained. The rest, of course, we understand entirely. Don't you?

Anyhow, there is the big picture now. Mr. Alfred Barnes was born in 1887. He has had a fairly long and wholly honourable life. We wonder if at any part of it he ever saw himself as Master of the Wheels, Monarch of Movement. That is what (as we understand the work) he will be. We see him as a big boy in a rich nursery, playing with trains and things. He presses a switch, and all the trains move round: great lorries whizz along the highway: long monkey-boats crawl up the canals. In a dim corner of the nursery his baby brothers are playing quietly with toy trucks which go round and round at the end of an elastic twenty-five miles long (and he keeps an eye on them). Only the aircraft overhead, and the ships at sea do not obey his Commission, his Executives, and him. All else that moves must move at his command. Suddenly the boy says: "I am tired of trains." "Let us 'discontinue these activities'" (Clause 3, subsection (5)). The switch goes back, and everything stops. Never, surely, did a single Englishman control so much.

A fanciful picture, perhaps, but our main criticism of this tremendous work is that it is not fanciful enough.

There is a failure of imagination. We have remarked before that the way to excite the citizens about Nationalization is to call it Royalization. Where the State "acquires" things, the State means the Crown, and the Crown means the King. No one is really very keen about the State: no one is thrilled by a Commission, or even a Transport Board. If the Royal Navy were run by something called the British Marine Commission we should care much less about it. His Majesty's Ship *Ajax* is one thing: the B.M.C. vessel *Ajax* would be another. And so, if Mr. Barnes wants us to be interested in his acquisition of puff-puffs and wagons and lorries and monkey-boats he should say that they are now going to be His Majesty's Puff-puff *Britannia*, or His Majesty's Canal-boat *Laura*. And let them both wear ensigns and the royal arms.

As it is, with great respect and regret, it seems to us that the whole thing is rather a bore. A. P. H.

This Correspondence Must Now Cease.

A History in Three Short Letters
(With apologies to the B.B.C.)

1st September 1945.

Messrs. Drake and Co.
Fur and Feather Merchants
Down Street, London, E.C.

DEAR SIRs,—We regret that, for the time being, our entire production is earmarked for export.

Yours faithfully,
THE PERFECTION TYPEWRITER
Co., LTD.

14th February 1946.

Messrs. Drake and Co.
Fur and Feather Merchants
Down Street, London, E.C.

DEAR SIRs,—We regret that owing to labour troubles in our machinery department, your order is not available for any mark t.

Yours faithfully,
THE PERFECTION TYPEWRITER
Co., LTD.

10th December 1946.

Messrs. Drake and Co.
Fur and Feather Merchants
Down Street, London, E.C.

DEAR SIRs,—Kindly quote for monohydrate of 2 gross boxes quality goods.

Yours faithfully,
THE PERFECTION TYPEWRITER
Co., LTD.

An Art Critic in Paris

Café de la Paix; Novembre
CHER M. PUNCH,—“*Sunday Times . . . Sunday Express . . . News of d'Vorld*”—the familiar figure, with his ingratiating smile, excruciating chant, and pitch on the fringe of the *terrasse*, hasn't altered a jot since I saw him last eight years ago, and it is reassuring to observe yet another relic of pre-war Paris from “a comfortable stall of the open-air theatre of the Boulevards,” as E. V. Lucas used to call it. In fact some surprising relics of earlier decades have appeared on the Boulevards since my last visit; and if Charles Keene's ‘Arry were beside me now, sipping his cognac and *café noir* (*pas de lait*, alas, these days), I should have no trouble in calling a growler and taking him for a drive through labyrinthine Montmartre and huddled Montparnasse, whose shuttered tenements, plane-trees, *cafés* and kiosks have changed not at all since his top-hat gleamed in the gas-lit Boulevards.

And how lovely are the glimpses of old Paris!—and (dare I confess it?) how they endure in the mind's eye when their representations, in the score of little galleries I have visited, are all but forgotten. As I sip my black coffee and abstractedly turn the pages of my *Sunday Times*, I conjure up a vision of the early morning—of the river below the Pont des Arts veiled in a November mist, the tremulous patterns of the platanes reflected in the still water and the prow of the Ile de la Cité magically suspended in space, and I grieve more than ever at the passing of Whistler and of the great French Impressionists. And I find myself wondering, as I pay my bill with a tattered note (another relic of an earlier period), what French painter outside the Louvre could possibly have done justice to the superb figure I encountered this morning in the Luxembourg Gardens—a benign, magisterial figure standing with his arms folded under his black robes, a beret on his rubicund and bearded head, and a twinkle in his eye for his young *écoliers* playing French-and-English among the statues—for all the world like some very human Doge, as Rembrandt might have painted him.

The triumph of Nature over Parisian Art—that is a dangerous theme to pursue, and I shall not offend the shade of Whistler (who still lectures one from the book-boxes) or risk the displeasure

of my friends who preside over the little galleries in the Rue des Saints Pères in the Latin Quarter—that stronghold of traditional art, where *l'art abstrait* is dismissed with a shrug and its devotees directed to the Right Bank. At Le Nouvel Essor, for example, there are some perfectly intelligible works of art by young

Some of his seated and recumbent figures on the walls of the Nouvel Essor are masterly drawings, and of his sculptures that I have seen the most impressive is *Le Vaincu*, a gladiatorial figure in whose superbly modelled frame every muscle is relaxed, which merits an honoured place even among the outdoor statuary of Paris.

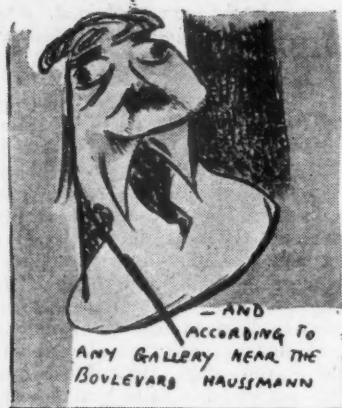
Homage to Maillol is paid by Belmondo, a Parisian with a deserved reputation, whose nudes seen from the back are modelled in the soft tones of the master; and if Madame Gacquart had nothing else on her walls, her little room would still be well worth a visit for the work of two artists of great promise and already brilliant achievement.

But her glowing *Femme aux Fleurs*, with its lovely red and orange passages, by Boussingault, whose pure and brilliant colour is matched in our country only by Matthew Smith's, a fine Derain of a boat-building yard in sombre browns and blues, relieved by a note of red in the right foreground, and some characteristically enchanting little pictures by Vergé Sarraz (which show little development since his 1928 exhibition at the Leicester Galleries) lure the critic to painters whose reputations are established.

Further down the Rue des Saints Pères, at the Galerie Framond, a place of honour has rightly been given to a large early canvas by Quizet, of a Montmartre slope crowned inevitably by the Sacré-Cœur, which at first glance might be taken for a Utrillo—with whom, indeed, the veteran artist once shared a studio. But whereas Utrillo would have given us one of his essays in architectural perspective—an uninterrupted view up the street—Quizet has chosen to break the formal pattern with a garden and some fencing in the middle-distance, which knits the composition and does not distract the eye from the centre of interest. When it is eligible for admission (a hundred years after the artist's birth) the Louvre authorities might well consider acquiring this remarkable painting. Elsewhere in the room the young provincial artist Belloc makes a delightful Parisian début with some magically coloured canvases, and that dauntless member of the Resistance, Geneviève Charpaon, for so long compelled to work underground by artificial light and now happily restored to her atelier, has recovered a sure sense of values and a lighter palette.



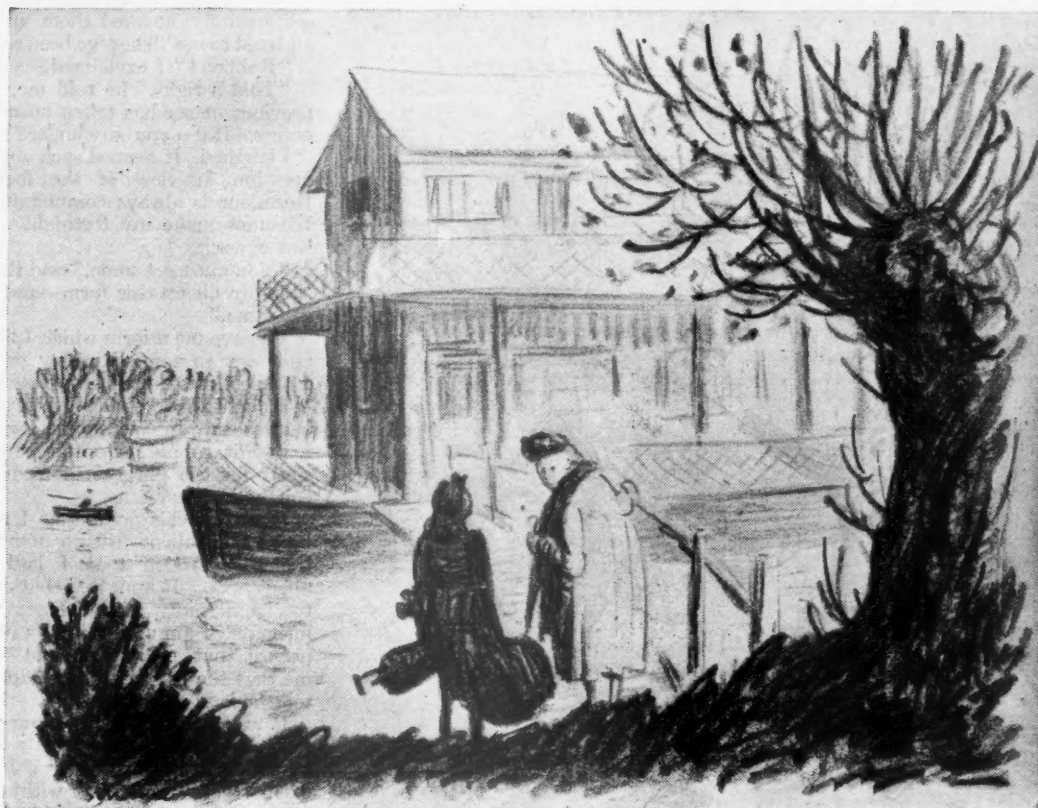
YOUR CRITIC —
 ACCORDING TO HIS PASSPORT



— AND
 ACCORDING TO
 ANY GALLERY NEAR THE
 BOULEVARD HAUSMANN

French painters and draughtsmen, which are not at all what to-day's ‘Arry means when he asks sceptically what you “see in this mod’n art.”

The spirits of Maillol and Despiau—sculptors and draughtsmen who have bequeathed an immortal legacy—dwell on in the Latin Quarter, and in no young sculptor-draughtsman does the spirit of Despiau burn more brightly than in Raymond Martin, whose female nudes—in carbon pencil, and sometimes sanguine—are drawn with a nervous line which follows the form and characteristics of the model.



"Actually, it ought to suit you here, Auntie; the river-bed's gravel."

Across the river, in the neighbourhood of the Boulevard Haussmann, on the first floors of charmingly appointed galleries, one finds exhibitions of the kind which set French and English critics alike searching (in Max's phrase) for adjectives long enough to express unqualified approval.

Indeed, I must confess that the foreword to the catalogue of Chastel's works at the Galerie Maeght has utterly defeated me. (What is one to make of: "*Toujours tout à neuf—sans lois—la grande pagaille avec seulement cette série de gnon dans l'estomac—l'évidence*"; and so on?) Happily I did not find the painter nearly so obscure as his apologist, and if one is prepared to surrender oneself to Chastel's satirical mood one can revel in his daring colour-schemes and admire the astonishing ingenuity of his grotesque figures, which contain now and again surprising echoes of El Greco.

Not far away, at the Galerie Creuze in the Avenue de Messine, there are some abstract paintings by the young Parisian Piaubert, a few arresting canvases by Charchonne, one of the earliest Cubists, and a splendid landscape by that old wizard Segonzac.

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YOUR newsagent can now supply you with a regular copy of PUNCH. Please place your order and ensure your weekly copy for the coming year.

If your Christmas present problem is unsolved we shall be glad to accept Gift Subscriptions to anywhere in the world. The rates are on the front cover of this issue.

And if these be not to his taste, let me remind the visitor that many of the treasures of the Louvre are at present on view at the Petit Palais, comfortably entitled *Grandeur de la Réalité*. I wish I could be his guide there, but instead—*recevez mes salutations amicales*.
N. A. D. W.

"TIN FRUIT
ON SALE
MONDAY NEXT."

Notice in Grocer's window in Guildford.
Substitute for wax?

"For information it is pointed out that hot water is not circulated in the radiators unless the outside temperature falls below a certain point which is entirely controlled by the R.E.s in charge of the heating system."—*From R.E.M.E. Company Orders*.
That W.D. snow is beastly cold stuff, by the way.



"Page eight, section forty-one, mate, 'Ighway Code. Look it up."

Telling the Bees

I HAVE never kept bees before, but when we managed to buy our cottage a hive was thrown in. The price was such that we were relieved to know something had been thrown in, and Hermione said they would be good for the fruit trees. She bought me a book about bee-keeping, but it must have been written for advanced students as it conveyed little to me. My knowledge of bees was at that time confined to a few basic facts, one of which was imprinted on part of my anatomy.

The peculiar thing was that, right from the start, Hermione insisted upon calling them *my* bees. She had

always referred to the dog possessively as "my dog." The pony, too, presumably came under her sole influence, though her proprietary rights were vested in the mere exertion of feeding it with bits of apple. But she would have nothing to do with the bees. They were assumed to be mine from the beginning, and there was scarcely a visitor who did not have some advice to impart to me about them.

It was September when we arrived, and for the first few weeks I did nothing beyond observing that they were flying in and out of the hive, which procedure seemed to be perfectly in order. Then a man came and

took the top off, while I withdrew to a safe distance. He inspected them quite calmly, covered them up again, and said to me "They've been robbed."

"Robbed?" I exclaimed.

"That's right," he told me. "The previous owner has taken most of the honey. Have you any sugar?"

I laughed. It seemed such an absurd question in view of the fact that Hermione is always complaining that I cannot make my fortnight's ration last a week.

"You must get some," said the man. "Simply fill up this form—and you'll get some."

He gave me a form which I filled up and sent to some Ministry or other. I think it was the Ministry of Fisheries—though I have no idea why it should have been. In due course I received a permit to purchase ten pounds of sugar for the purpose of feeding one colony of bees.

It was at this point that I remembered one salient feature of much of the conversation that I had heard about bees. It appeared that one had to be friendly with them, almost intimate. I am naturally of a reserved nature, but everybody had warned me that the proper thing to do was to tell the bees one's secrets.

It was a fine sunny morning when I first approached them with a resolve to break down any barriers that had existed between us, but within a few minutes Hermione was industriously applying the blue-bag to my left cheek.

"I was simply standing by the hive talking to them," I complained, "in the friendliest possible fashion. You remember how one is supposed to tell the bees everything?"

"What were you saying to them?" asked Hermione, as she triumphantly withdrew the sting.

"One isn't supposed to tell anybody," I said, rather hesitantly. After all, I suppose they had a grievance. I was simply asking them if there was any possibility of their managing on saccharin.

o o

"Peter Rabbit" Christmas Cards

THE Invalid Children's Aid Association are again selling a "Peter Rabbit" Christmas Card to help the funds of their Heart Home at West Wickham. These attractive cards (6d. each, with envelope) can be obtained from the Honourable Angela Baring, Itchen Stoke Manor, Alresford, Hants.

Our Booking Office

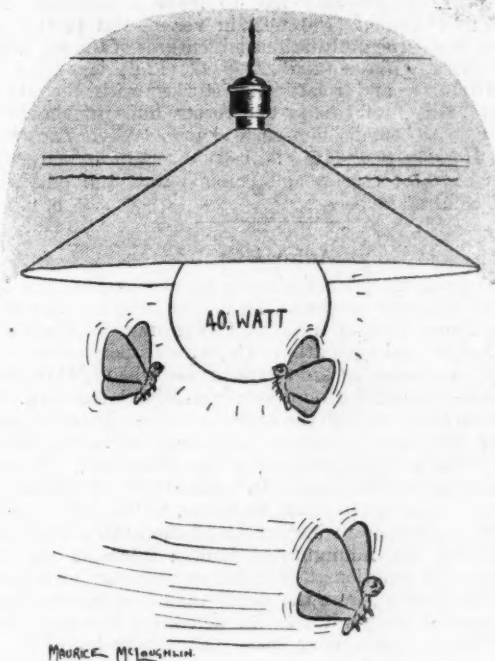
(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Christmas Books for Children

THERE is nothing very shining among the children's books this year, nothing to make one regret having been born too early for a full shower of magic, but a good many authors cater earnestly and competently for our earnest and competent young. The best is Miss NOEL STREATFEILD, whose *Party Frock* (COLLINS, 8/6) provides a story, a warning, rewards and entertainment. It is also a guide for pageant-players. Her young people are as-nice-as-life and very natural, but she never rewards them too easily. DAVID SEVERN's *Forest Holiday* (BODLEY HEAD, 7/6) is well up to former standards, though at times he puts his young people through the hoops of adventure pretty savagely, loses them in a forest, lets them see gipsy fights and even a Romany funeral pyre. His book will be good for would-be-toughs, and so will *The House of the Lady-bird* (MULLER, 6/-), by PHYLLIS I. NORRIS, though it contains less-likely savagery, since children, who visit a tea-shop-keeping aunt, are mobbed by village children, who suspect them of being Nazi spies. They also chance on the body of a German prisoner! The above will do for boys and girls (particularly the latter) of twelve and upwards, though Miss STREATFEILD will delight grown-ups too, as will NORMAN ELLISON, naturalist of the B.B.C.'s Children's Hour, whose *Wandering with Nomad* (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON PRESS, 6/-), illustrated by C. F. TUNNICLIFFE, gives a mass of fascinating information, including how to find seed-pearls in mussels. And a new edition of *Oliver Twist* (COLLINS, 8/6), with good sensible print and satisfying illustrations in the "Phiz" tradition by HARRY KEIR, must also have a mention.

The Patchwork Book (PILOT PRESS, 12/6) is a safe choice for most ages and tastes. It is a bumper anthology, chosen and edited by MARGHANITA LASKI, and contains stories and selections from Mark Twain, Marco Polo, Rider Haggard, Thomas Day, Louisa Alcott, with a spattering of poetry (this rather too well-known) and odd information on how, for instance, to cook hedgehogs and conjure up fairies. Another good miscellany, and easier on the pocket, is *Junior 3* (CHILDREN'S DIGEST PUBLICATIONS, 3/6), which has articles on sweet-making, Greek masks, the use of penicillin and so on. The old-fashioned child was accustomed to have its pills of knowledge smothered in jam of a sort, but the new-fangled ones are more wisely treated. Here, for the serious-minded, are four books on special subjects. *Wheels* (PLEIADES BOOKS, 8/6) gives the whole story of the wheel, from the log-rolling of primitive man to caterpillar tractors. It is described shortly and illustrated modernly in bright colour by OLIVER HILL and HANS TISDALL. *So Long Ago* (COLLINS, 10/6), by E. BOYD SMITH, is a picture story about prehistoric creatures and is vouched for as "reasonably accurate" by NELDA E. WRIGHT, of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology. No such professional caution is necessary in recommending *Funny Fishes* (ART AND EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS, 5/-), a book for the quite young—perhaps up to seven or eight years—about curious tropical fish. ALICE KENDALL's descriptions are as lively as her illustrations are colourful and entertaining. Then there is *The Tale of the Bull-Frog* (COLLINS, 5/-), by HENRY B. KANE. The life story is written in good simple prose and the author's high-speed photography and line drawings are excellent. *The Life Story of the Beaver* (TRANSATLANTIC ARTS, 3/6), by G. M. VEVERS, is also first-rate, and so is *The Story of Plant Life* (PUFFIN PICTURE BOOKS, 1/-), by ISABEL ALEXANDER.

This year we are spared fluffy fairies but we have some sophisticated dragons of domestic trend. *Freddy and Ernest* (TRANSATLANTIC ARTS, 6/-), written and illustrated by HILARY STEBBING, is about two who lived at Wellbottom Pogg's and tried to make a living. They began laundry-work, but their breath was too scorching, so they hired themselves out as blow-lamps. Their adventures are really amusing. *The White Deer* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 6/-), by JAMES THURBER, may be too slyly written for the very young, but others will sympathize with the king whose hunting was ruined by the number of deer that turned out to be princesses, and who then found further bafflement—a princess who was really a white deer. Another distinguished American, E. B. WHITE, contributes *Stuart Little* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 7/6), a very successful story, full of action, about a mouse with a philosophical turn of mind. A short glossary helps English readers over the traditional difficulties of "pants," "sneakers" and "sarsaparilla." *The Dragon Fish* (METHUEN, 7/6), by PEARL BUCK, has delicate line and wash pictures by KIDDELL-MONROE, and is about a little Chinese girl who made friends with a little English girl. They were both tired of brothers, so they went in search of a dragon fish who would bring them luck. This may be the best book of the year—it is so sensible and simple and warm. The funniest is *Mike the Muckshifter* (CAPE, 6/-), which is about a scruffy boy who made good and is written and illustrated by FRANK WILSON. It is full of enchanting and lively drawings. One shows Mike



"SUCH a snob, my dear—it's hundred-watt or nothing for her."

house, a pert pretty daughter, a talented painter for his son-in-law, and bonny grandchildren; but these bore him. He is still looking for romance. Nothing incredible in that of course, but Challis as a whole does not come off. Like the other figures, some of whom are much more solid, he is there to show off the schoolmistress, who is shy, prim, rather serious and romantic, but sensible as well as sensitive. Little by little she sheds her gaucheries as she studies her friends. When one egotist, for instance, bores her to death with devotion and confidences, she wonders uneasily "Am I ever like that?" With touches such as this Miss GIBBONS keeps the reader mildly and continuously entertained, and her one big set-piece—when Challis, out with his latest little typist, on a platonic but strictly sentimental footing, is assailed with shouts of "Grandpa!"—is consummately well managed.

J. S.

Jack Jones

Mr. JACK JONES, whose *Unfinished Journey*, an account of his life as a Welsh miner, had a great success some years ago, has now continued his autobiography in *Me and Mine*. (HAMISH HAMILTON, 15/-). The book opens in 1937 with his state of suspense before the publication of *Unfinished Journey* and while he was waiting for a verdict on his play *Land of My Fathers*. "It was a Tuesday morning, and Laura (Mrs. Jones) and I were not on speaking terms because of something she had said the day before." Then the postman arrives with a letter telling him that his play has won the prize of £25, news which puts Mr. JONES right with his wife, who, however, points out that they will be in the workhouse before the money reaches them, and will he write for half of it to be sent at once? This is one of the innumerable little episodes, simply and vividly recounted, which make up the four hundred odd pages of this book. In 1938 he spoke at the National Book Fair organized by the *Sunday Times*. He was famous by now, and notes that whereas the next morning one paper said his speech had "electrified" the audience, "the *Daily Sketch* only went so far as to say that I had 'fascinated' them." During the war he visited the States twice, and also spoke to the troops in Belgium, Holland and Italy, and recounts all these experiences with the same engaging blend of simplicity and shrewdness.

H. K.

Flora's Bargain-Counter

Gambling, strikes and plain stealing apart, there are not so many ways of getting something for nothing as the contemporary mind would desire. The use of herbal foods and remedies is, however, one of them. True you have to grow your herbs if you are debarred access to the countryside; but both the suburban and the rustic housewife are catered for in Mrs. MARY THORNE QUELCH's *Herbs and How to Know Them* (FABER, 8/6). Beauty as well as utility attend the small suburban garden which has staked its all on fruit salads and herbs; and so many of the herbs are tough, grey-leaved perennials, such as lad's love and sage, that afford protection for minute treasures like chives, as well as winter décor. The countrywoman has a wider range, merely for the trouble of ranging; and Mrs. QUELCH offers her an admirable series of recipes not only for sloes, water-cress, wild garlic, and so forth, but for cushions, divans and mattresses stuffed with beech leaves. Her mode of crystallizing violets and rose-petals is too cumbrous. All you need do is to paint them with white-of-egg, dust them with sugar and dry them in a slow oven. And she has omitted mushrooms!

H. P. E.

Fishermen's Pleasure

The big trout have the good sense to live in some of the best valleys in England, and anglers, and indeed all countrymen, should be grateful to Dr. E. A. BARTON for *An Album of the Chalk Streams* (BLACK, 18/-), a collection of forty-seven superb photographs, to each of which he adds a short note telling how the shot was taken and giving local colour which completes the picture. To capture the details of sedges, the full beauties of shadows and reflections and the rich effects of light and foliage he has commonly been obliged to use a time exposure, and the difficulties he describes of keeping a tripod laden with a heavy plate-camera on an even keel in the soft mud of a river-bank explains why so many fishing photographs lop their subjects grotesquely and present them at alarming gradients. His are magnificent studies, ranging from the sharp brilliance of may-fly days to the sombre misty background of winter forays after jack and grayling. The magic valleys of Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire are lovely at any time of year and he has caught them in most of their moods. His notes are charmingly written and, as he modestly suggests, these photographs will have more than a passing value for a sad world in which pollution is destroying our finest streams.

E. O. D. K.

Sir ALAN HERBERT has collected sixty-six "Misleading Cases" in *Uncommon Law* (METHUEN, 9/6), including ten not previously published. Thus, at a very moderate price, the whole corpus of his penetrating legal studies, as fascinating for the layman as for the lawyer, is made available to the public. Another book needing no introduction to *Punch* readers is *The Phoney Phleet* (MULLER, 8/6), a collection of Commander JUSTIN RICHARDSON's verses, to which the epithet "Gilbertian" has rightly been applied. Major J. S. HICKS has provided appropriate illustrations.



"With these modern inventions housework's a pleasure."

Old Stuff

IT is always amusing when a thing one has known about for some time is suddenly stumbled on by somebody else and acclaimed as a new idea. The recent news story headed "ALL RANKS GET VOICE IN R.A.F. COUNCILS" made me smile loftily. Any airman who attended one of Squadron-Leader Whalebone's "A" Squadron meetings will confirm that he was the father of such democratic occasions as long ago as 1941, when we were specially paraded in the gymnasium one warm June evening to put our heads together over the forthcoming Squadron sports meeting.

In previous years, under the old C.O., the sports arrangements had been made by a select committee in the Officers' Mess bar. Instructions then appeared in Orders as to who should take part in what, and how many inches running-shorts should measure from the waist to the nether hem. While resulting in well-filled lists and large if unimpassioned attendances the system had had its shortcomings (a nervous airman desiring to compete in the high jump had instead been detailed to put the weight, and had put it over the edge of the grand-stand on to the Station Commander's foot) and Squadron-Leader Whalebone meant to change all that.

"I know," began the C.O. with jocularly, when he had considerably stood us at ease, "that the word

'volunteer' is not popular"—groans and respectful titters—"but this evening I am only asking you to volunteer to talk to me as man to man"—stupefied silence—"forgetting rank absolutely"—shocked and incredulous rustling—"and telling me exactly what you think—"

"About the sports," whispered the Adjutant cautiously.

"—on this—ah—question of the Squadron sports."

The faint groan that went up was tempered with sighs of relief from those who had expected something worse. The C.O. coughed and scanned his notes for a neat finish.

"I—ah—want all your voices to be heard," he said, and sat down.

"Not yet!" interposed Warrant Officer Crump.

"One at a time!" said Flight Sergeant Roundel.

"And keep your feet still, some of yew," said Sergeant Gimble, who tried to get his chin inside his collar when speaking on official matters and sounded as if his voice were being expelled under pressure between rubber rollers.

"Right," said the Adjutant heartily, taking over. "Any suggestions of any kind?"

A man with red hair bushing out at the sides of his cap took a shambling pace forward.

"Questions on sporting topics, the

officer means," warned Crump quickly. He gave the volunteer a stern look, so that after appearing to explore a hollow tooth with his tongue for a moment he gave a slight jerk of the head signifying resigned comprehension and stepped back again.

Nobody else moved.

"Keepin' the Commandin' Officer waitin'," brayed Sergeant Gimble in a voice that even made the C.O. jump. "Speak up smartly, some of yew!"

"All right, Sergeant," said the C.O. "This is quite informal. Ask that man," he said to the Adjutant, "what he was going to say."

"That man, sir?"

"The man who wants a hair-cut," said the C.O.

The Adjutant passed on the instruction to Warrant Officer Crump, who addressed the red-headed man intimidatimgly.

"What was you going to say, airman?"

"Nothing."

"Address the Warrant Officer as 'sir,' airman," said Flight Sergeant Roundel.

"And get your 'air cut,'" said Sergeant Gimble.

"Come along," said the C.O., smiling with horrible geniality. "What were you going to ask me? Something about the sports, I believe?"

"Partially, in a way of speaking," said the man, fixing his gaze on the parallel-bars behind the rostrum and removing his cap only to replace it in precisely the position it had previously occupied.

"Good. What event are you interested in?"

"I didn't quite catch."

"Address the Commanding Officer as—"

"All right, Mr. Crump, thank you. What is your particular sport, airman?"

"Do the Pools."

"Ah," said the C.O., brushing all warnings aside—"well, I'm afraid there won't be any swimming events. Are you a good swimmer? Any medals or certificates, eh?"

"No."

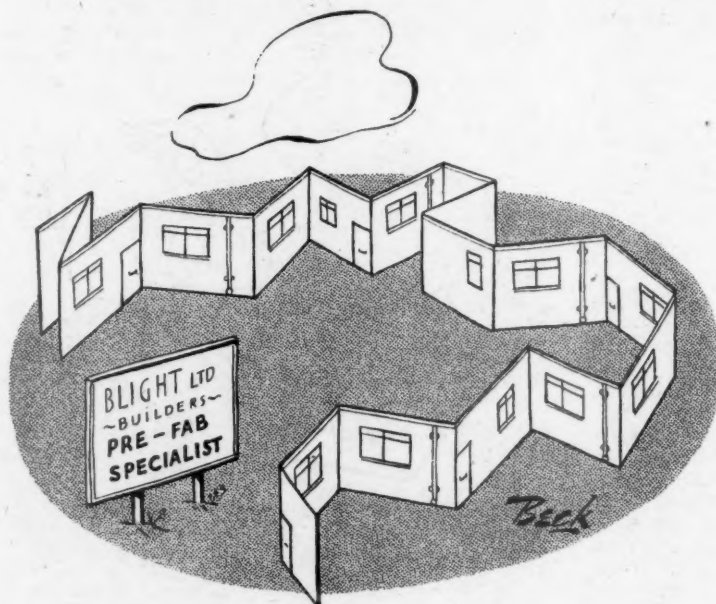
"I see. Just swim a little, is that it?"

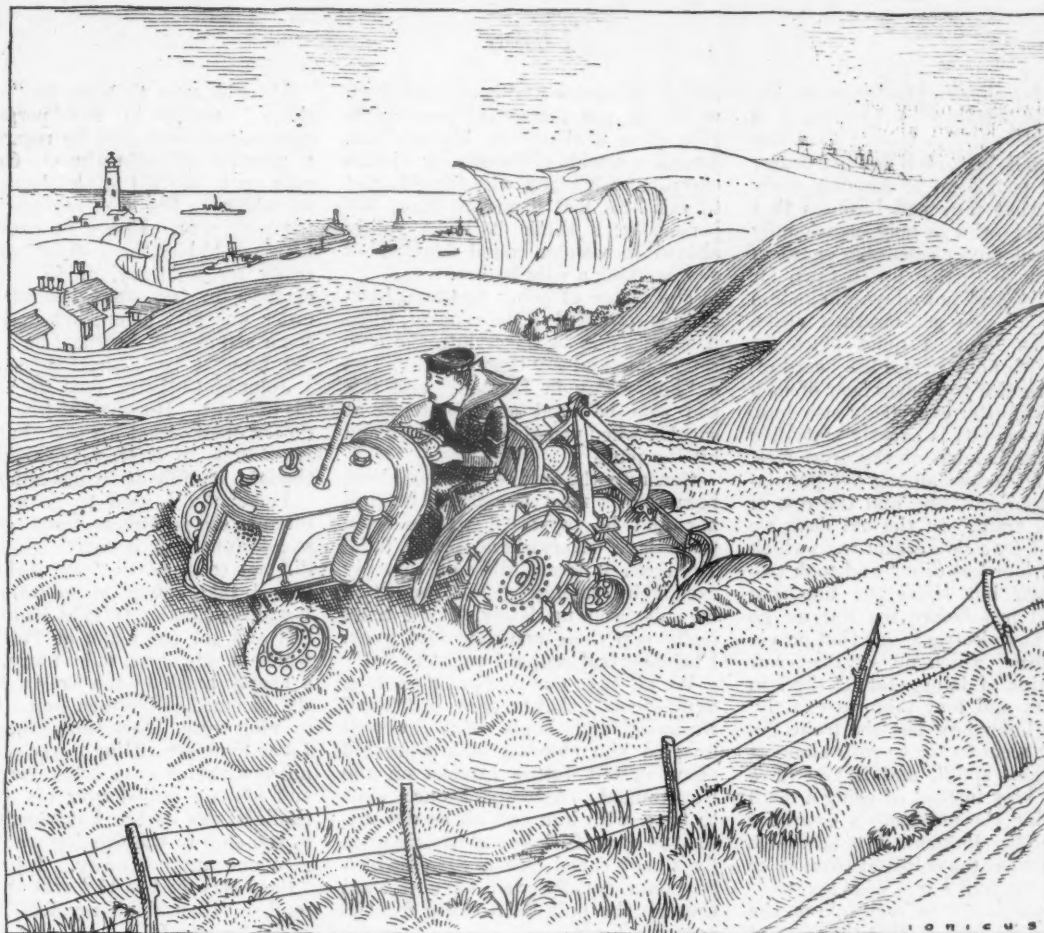
"Can't swim," said the man.

The Adjutant at last got his lips to the C.O.'s ear. The C.O. coughed and took his gloves off.

"Never mind," he said, putting them on again. "What was it you were going to ask—?"

"QUIET!" cried Warrant Officer Crump. An impatient shuffling was spreading forward from the rear ranks. Most of them had no idea why they were there and the proceedings had





afforded no clue so far. They wanted to get away to the Naafi before all the beer went flat.

The C.O. repeated his question, and after a prolonged pause the red-headed airman allowed one word to drop grudgingly into the gulf of our silence.

"Boiler-house," he said.

The C.O. nodded amiably, but presently said to the Adjutant, "What does he mean?"

"Ask him what he means, Mr. Crump."

"What do you mean, airman? Speak up smartly, let the Commandin' Officer be hearing you."

The airman's eyes appeared to be traversing the horizontals of the parallel-bars. After one or two round trips they focused on a point in the gymnasium floor, a yard and a half in front of his boots.

"Boiler-house," he explained. "Coke fatigues. Same detail every week. Polishin' brass. Wheelin' barrers.

'Shovellin' coke. Scratch your boots, put on a fizzer."

The beginnings of a mild cheer rose from the throats of the dozen or so men within earshot.

"Quiet, some of yew," intoned Sergeant Gimble, his lower jaw so contorted that his tie bobbed with each word. The C.O. threw the Adjutant a despairing glance.

"What has that to do with the matter?" asked the Adjutant sternly.

"That's it," nodded the red-headed man. "Ought to 'ave a rota. Same detail every time, not sporting."

There was a long silence. Warrant Officer Crump was seen to bite his lip. The Adjutant became preoccupied with the alignment of his belt-buckle. The C.O. coughed and took off his hat, putting it on at once with a glove inside it and taking it off again. Then he looked at his watch.

"Are there any further suggestions?" he asked, and the silence once more

roared in our ears until, with salutes all round, Squadron-Leader Whalebone and his retinue left us stiffly and went to form a select committee in the Officers' Mess bar.

There was a one hundred per cent. turn-out for the sports that year, and the occasion was only slightly marred when a red-headed airman flung a javelin through the glass roof of the boiler-house, unsuccessfully pleading in mitigation, when charged with malicious damage, that when ordered to volunteer for the sports he had actually proffered his services as a programme-seller only.

But of course all this happened in the bad old days when it was not really legal for A.C.2s and squadron-leaders to argy-bargy on equal terms. I think we all felt that. Now that meetings of this kind are bound to take place by order of the Air Council they will no doubt turn out quite differently.

J. B. B.

Town

IN order thoroughly to appreciate the importance of London it is necessary to live at least sixty-five miles from it, because if you live nearer so many people go to London every day on what they call business that other people who go only occasionally cannot feel any pleasurable sense of distinction in "going up to town for the day." And nowadays distinction is about all you get on such visits, unless you know a quiet place for lunch which nobody else has heard of, and in practice you never hear of such places until after everybody else does.

Munton-on-Sea is exactly sixty-five miles from London as the crow flies, but the few crows among our population seldom go there, and the rest of us go by train. In the old days we used to go by a slow steam-train which went more or less direct and took two hours flat, but since the line was electrified just before the war we go by very fast electric trains that go via Craggsbourne, which no sensible crow would think of doing, and get there in two hours and four minutes exactly. I do not know how fast the trains go, but they seem to me to rush along at a dangerous speed, and if you have tea on a tray instead of being a devil and paying the one-and-six extra for a seat in the Pullman it is advisable either to wear tea-coloured trousers or else to keep your knees wide apart.

The train is always very cold on the townward journey, so that the seeds of

future chilblains are sown, and very warm on the homeward journey to give them a chance to blossom out. Sympson avoids chilblains by always carrying with him a wire filing basket to raise his feet from the floor, but personally I think it looks rather absurd to wander round London all day carrying a wire basket.

The virtue of going to town, however, is rewarded in the evening, when it sounds well to totter into the club rather late and say that you have had a "heavy day in London," and this can also be used as an excuse at snooker when you aim at the black and hit the pink.

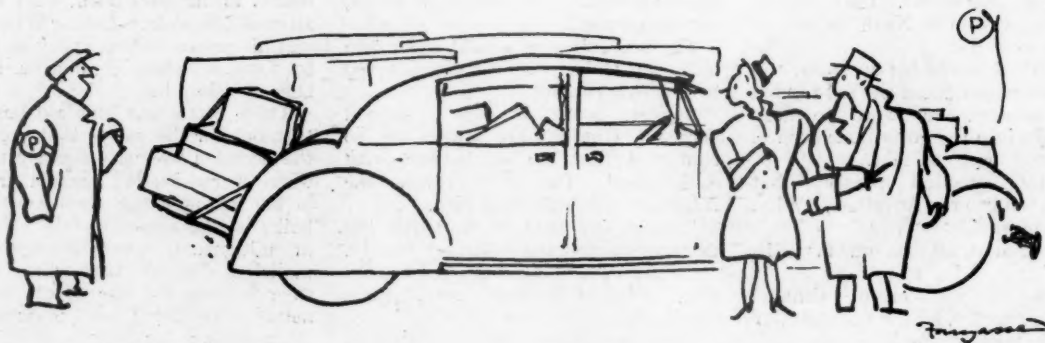
Generally the excursion comes about because you meet somebody else in a bar and he says: "I was in town yesterday. Everywhere is very full." To which it seems difficult to reply except by saying: "Full, is it? I haven't been up lately, but I must really pop there one day next week. I have several people I ought to see."

We all have our particular excuses. Sympson says that he goes on Political Business, and hopes that we will imagine him closeted with Churchill planning out future attacks on the Government. Actually I once went to town with him and all he did was to have a lot of drinks and pay sixpence for a book called *How to Speak*, which he could equally well have ordered through the post if he really felt the necessity for it.

My wife goes to town to "see the shops," which in her perpetually couponless state must be regarded as a penance of self-torture. Gurgeon goes up to see his tailor about a suit for which he has been negotiating for the past year. Either he goes for a fitting or to tick them off for not being ready for a fitting, or to announce changes in his waist-line since the order was first given, but except for some samples of buttons, he has not yet brought back anything solid.

Johnson-Clitheroe goes up to have his hair cut. He says the local people do not understand his hair, but there is so little of it that I should have thought it difficult to misunderstand.

Personally I used to go up fairly often to see publishers, but I had very small profit from it and the publishers did not seem particularly thrilled, so now I take refuge in subterfuge. I board the London train at Munton-on-Sea and get out again at Polchester, which is only seven miles away. After a hearty lunch in the Crown I go to the cinema, and return home by the evening train. Last time I was there I saw Sympson sitting in the one-and-nines with his coat collar turned up and his cap pulled over his eyes. I think he saw me too, but when we met in the club in the evening we did not give one another away. I just said "Busy day in town?" and Sympson replied "Rushed off my feet," and I said "So was I."



"Would you like to see me now, sir, in case I've gone before you get back?"

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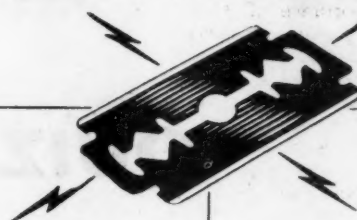
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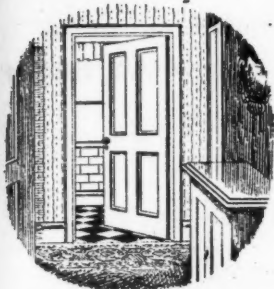
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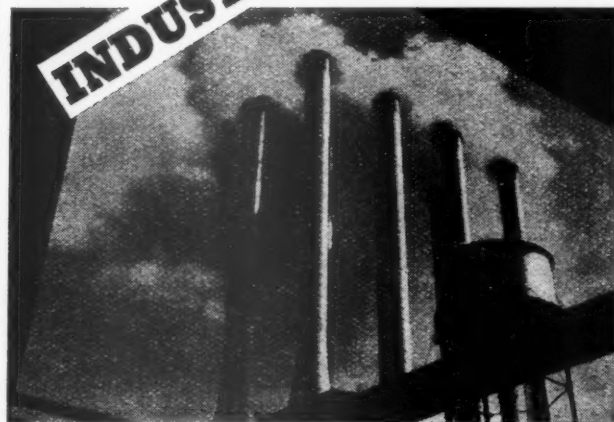


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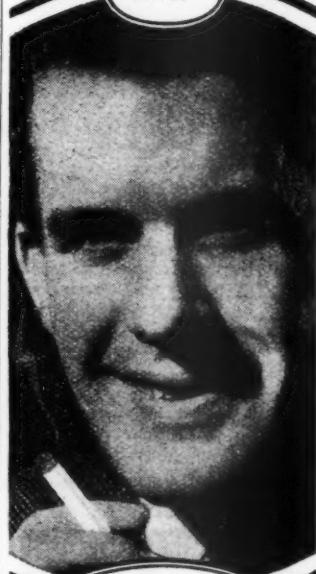
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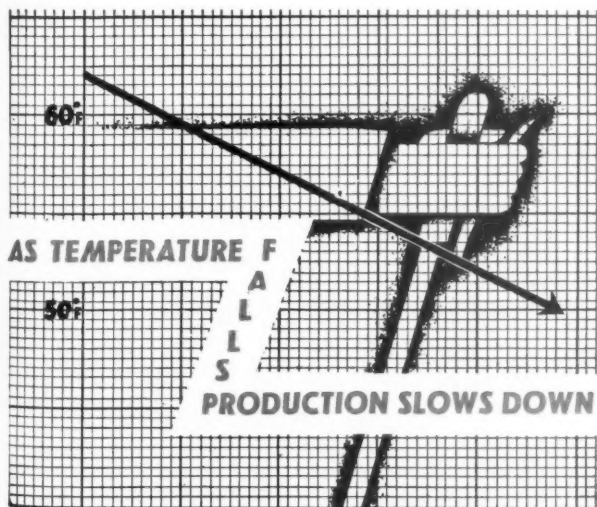
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